TREASURES OF ENGLISH VERSE

HERBERT STRANG'S LIBRARY

"SMALL CLOUDS ARE SAILING,
BLUE SKY PREVAILING;
THE RAIN IS OVER AND GONE!"
(Written in March)

Herbert Strang's Library

TREASURES OF ENGLISH VERSE

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PREFACE

It is probable that no two persons would ever agree on a principle of selection for an anthology of verse. My own aim is simple: to provide for children a collection of poems, old and new, all of them having some claim to be regarded as *poetry*, and the most of them short enough to be learnt by heart, not as a set task, but spontaneously, by force of their own impression upon the youthful imagination. The collection includes many old favourites, and a large number of modern pieces that have never appeared in any similar anthology. The first part is intended specially for young children; the second, containing a good proportion of ballads and narrative poems, will be held to be more particularly suited to boys; the third, while not lacking in the story element, has more of the lyrical and the contemplative that appeal to girls. But no hard-and-fast line of distinction can be drawn, and in either part both boys and girls with a taste for poetry will find much to interest and satisfy them.

Acknowledgment of permission to reprint copyright poems is made to the following, whose poems appear with their names attached: Lady Grey of Fallodon (Pamela Tennant), Mrs. Tynan Hinkson (Katharine Tynan), Madame Duclaux

(Mary F. Robinson), M. Horace Smith, Miss Laurence Alma Tadema, Sir Henry Newbolt, Sir William Watson, Mr. William Canton, Mr. Thomas Hardy, Mr. Rudyard Kipling, Mr. Walter de la Mare, Mr. John Masefield, Mr. Alfred Noyes, Mr. Arthur Symons, and Mr. William Butler Yeats; also to Messrs. Macmillan & Co. for the poems by Alfred Austin; to Sir Henry Newbolt for the poem by Mary Coleridge; to Messrs. John Lane for the poem by John Davidson; to Mr. Alban Dobson for the poem by Austin Dobson; to Messrs. Whitcombe and Tombs for the poem by George Essex Evans; to Mr. Martin Secker for the poem by James Elroy Flecker; to Messrs. Macmillan and Co. for the poems by William Ernest Henley; to Dr. Greville MacDonald and Messrs. Chatto and Windus for the poem by George MacDonald; to Mr. Wilfred Meynell for the poems by Alice Meynell; to Messrs. Longmans for the poem by William Morris and the poems from R. L. Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses*; to Mr. T. T. Tucker for the poem by E. Nesbit; and to Messrs. Chatto and Windus for the poem from R. L. Stevenson's *Underwoods*.

HERBERT STRANG.

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PART I

THE RAINDROPS' MESSAGE

THE silver raindrops patter
  Upon the earth to-day ;
Tap ! Tap ! Their knock is gentle,
  And this is what they say :

" Oh ! little flowers, awaken,
  And open wide your door ;
Come out, in pretty dresses,
  For Spring is here once more."

Lucy Diamond

SPRING

IN the Spring come brighter skies,
Many a flower blows, fresh and gay ;
Elves let loose the butterflies,
And children laugh, and sing, and play.

Agnes Grozier Herbertson

FAIRY UMBRELLA

OUT in the waving meadow grass
The pretty daisies grow,

I love to see their golden eyes,
Their petals white as snow.

I wonder if the fairies use
The dainty little flowers
To keep their frocks from getting wet
In sudden April showers.

Lucy Diamond

THE NEST

A LITTLE bird sat on a bough.
He sat and sang: "I'm happy now;
The cold, cold wind has gone to bed;
The sun is shining overhead,
And shining on a little nest,
And on a bird with browny breast."

"Where is your nest?"
"Ah: no one knows,
But two little birds
And a briar rose."

Margaret Ashworth

THE VIOLET

AH, violet, dearest violet,
Will you not tell me, dear,
Why you are here so early,
Ere other flowers appear?

Because I am so tiny,
Therefore in May come I;
If I came with the others
I fear you'd pass me by.

THE SNOWDROPS

"WHERE are the snowdrops?" said the sun.
"Dead!" said the frost,
"Buried and lost—
Every one!"

"A foolish answer," said the sun:
"They did not die.
Asleep they lie—
Every one!

"And I will wake them, I, the sun,
Into the light,
All clad in white—
Every one!"

Annie Matheson

THE TURTLE-DOVE'S NEST

HIGH in the pine-tree,
The little turtle-dove
Made a little nursery
To please her little love:
"Coo," said the turtle-dove,
"Coo," said she,
In the long and shady branches
Of the dark pine-tree.

The young turtle-doves
Never quarrelled in the nest:
For they dearly loved each other,
Though they loved their mother best:
"Coo," said the little doves,
"Coo," said she;
And they played together kindly
In the dark pine-tree.

BABY SONG

WHAT does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day ?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger.
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day ?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger.
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

THE DEW FAIRIES

THE little fairies of the dew
  Come stealing downwards in the night,
And over meadow, vale and hill,
  They pass, with footsteps soft and light.

They bear wee drops all fresh and cool
  For thirsty leaves and fading flowers,
And over parched and sun-dried grass
  They scatter light and silvery showers.

The children never hear them pass,
  But in the morning they may find
How all the fairies of the dew
  Have fled, and left their gems behind.

Lucy Diamond

IF YOU HAVE A TABBY-CAT

If you have a tabby-cat,
  If you want to please him,
Tie a ribbon round his neck,
  Never, never tease him.
Tabby-cats are grave and stately,
And they like to act sedately.

Agnes Grozier Herbertson

A THRUSH'S SONG

Did he do it ? Did he do it ?
Come and see, come and see,
Cherry sweet, cherry sweet,
Knee-deep, knee-deep,
Pity *you*, pity *you*,
To me ! To me ! To me !

Pamela Tennant

THE RABBITS

The little furry rabbits
  Keep very, very still,
And peep at me across the grass
  As I walk up the hill.

But if I venture nearer
  To join them at their play,
A flash of white—and they are gone,
  Not one of them will stay !

Lucy Diamond

WEE WILLIE WINKIE

WEE Willie Winkie runs through the town,
Upstairs and downstairs in his night-gown.
Peeping through the window, crying through the lock,
"Are all the children in their beds? It's past eight o'clock."

THE MOON BOAT

THE Lady Moon up yonder
Is like a silver boat
Upon a dark blue ocean,
All silently afloat.

And when the fairies waken
They'll climb the moonbeams white,
And far across the heavens
Go sailing in the night.

Lucy Diamond

ROBIN

ROBIN sang sweetly
When the days were bright.
"Thanks! Thanks for Summer!"
He sang with all his might.

Robin sang sweetly
In the Autumn days.
"There are fruits for every one.
Let all give praise!"

In the cold and wintry weather
Still hear his song.
"Somebody must sing," said Robin,
"Or Winter will seem long."

When the Spring came back again
  He sang : " I told you so !
Keep on singing through the Winter ;
  It will always go ! "

THE MOLE

Oh, funny little Mr. Mole,
  Your house is large and fine,
Your velvet coat is grander far
  Than any coat of mine.

And yet I would not change with you,
  Not for a single day !
It's surely not a pleasant thing
  Beneath the ground to stay.

I like to see the summer sky,
  And breathe the fresh, sweet air.
How very, very strange of you
  To choose to live down there !

Lucy Diamond

THE NUT TREE

I had a little nut tree,
  Nothing would it bear
But a silver nutmeg,
  And a golden pear.
The King of Spain's daughter
  Came to visit me,
And all was because of
  My little nut tree.
I skipped over the water,
  I danced over the sea,
And all the birds in the air
  Could not catch me.

THREE LITTLE FISH

THREE little fish a-swimming went
Upon a summer day,
Full many a wondrous thing they found,
And very pleased were they.
At night they saw the sun grow red
Behind the crooked spire :
" There must be something wrong," they said,
" Let's hurry home, and get to bed
Before the world's on fire ! "

Agnes Grozier Herbertson

THE BROOK

I LIKE to watch the merry brook
  Go rippling on its way ;
It sings me such a happy song
  All through the summer day ;
It tells me tales of many things,
  As on the grass I lie,
About the hills from which it came,
  And where it goes—and why.
And if I had a tiny boat,
  A-sailing I would go,
And hasten with the brook to join
  The river deep and slow.

Lucy Diamond

THE WHISPER-WHISPER MAN

THE Whisper-whisper man
  Makes all the wind in the world.
He has a gown as brown as brown ;
  His hair is long and curled.

In the stormy winter-time
  He taps at your window-pane,

And all the night, until it's light,
  He whispers through the rain.

If you peeped through a Fairy Ring
  You'd see him, little and brown ;
You'd hear the beat of his clackety feet
  Scampering through the town.

Thora Stowell

THE GRANDFATHER CLOCK

Our clock has such a merry face,
And from his corner in the hall,
He watches me go in and out,
Upstairs and down I hear his call.

He tells me when 'tis time to rise,
He rings so loudly when it's eight,
And, oh, I'm sure he looks at me
When I come down to breakfast late.

He talks to me throughout the day
With echoing tick and ringing chime,
And tells the hours for work or play,
For dinner, tea, or supper time.

And even if I wake at night,
All in the lonely dark, I hear
The dear old clock who never sleeps,
And feel as if a friend is near.

Lucy Diamond

THE OWL

Tu-whit ! Tu-whoo ! The old white owl
Wakes up at night when watch-dogs howl.
He's very old, and very wise,
He sees so much with big round eyes.

He lives within the dark church tower,
And sometimes, at the twilight hour,
I see him pass across the sky,
But never, never hear him fly.

Lucy Diamond

OWLS AT BED-TIME

When the night is very dark
Little fluffy owls creep out
From their nests in hollow trees.
We can see them flit about,
We can hear them as they cry,
" Tu-whit, tu-whoo ! " as they go by.
" Tu-whit, tu-whoo ! Tu-whit, tu-whoo !
Oh, children dear, good-night to you."

When the great big sun comes out,
When again we see the day,
Back into their hollow trees
Little owlets find their way.
And sleepily we hear them cry,
" Tu-whit, tu-whoo ! " as they go by.
" Tu-whit, tu-whoo ! Tu-whit, tu-whoo !
Oh, children dear, good-day to you."

Thora Stowell

A WAKING SONG

Dainty snowdrops, tell me, pray—
  In the earth so deep,
Are your little sister flowers
  Waking from their sleep ?

Will the crocus ladies soon
  Silken robes unfold ?

Are the dancing daffodils
  Donning gowns of gold ?

Winter days have been so long,
  Very dark and drear,
Now the sun shines out again
  Surely spring is near.

Lucy Diamond

NIGHT-TIME

I LIE in my bed and I hear in the street
  The people passing by ;
The slow, the quick, the limping feet ;
  I see a bit of the sky.

The wind is there, and the stars are bright,
  And the clouds are hurrying past ;
I should like to ride on the wind at night,
  Ever so high and fast !

The fairies may go, the witches too,
  But children must sleep in bed.
How I wish we had magical brooms—don't you ?—
  To ride on the wind instead !

Thora Stowell

THE NIGHT WIND

THERE'S someone tapping at the window,
There's someone whispering at the door,
There's someone creeping through below there,
And lifting up the carpet from the floor.

Shuh ! there's a crying and a moaning ;
Hist ! what a racket and a din !
Ho ! such a roaring in the chimney ;
'Tis the night wind trying to get in.

Catherine A. Morin

THE SNAIL

How would you like to take with you your house upon your back,
And such a funny house as this—all curly, brown and black ?
You say, " As slow as any snail," and yet I'd like to see
If *you'd* go any faster, if you had a load like me !

Lucy Diamond

ANSWER TO A CHILD'S QUESTION

Do you know what the birds say ? The Sparrow, the Dove,
The Linnet and Thrush say, " I love and I love ! "
In the winter they're silent—the wind is so strong ;
What it says, I don't know, but it sings a loud song.

But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm weather,
And singing, and loving—all come back together.
But the Lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings, and for ever sings he—
" I love my Love and my Love loves me ! "

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

THE FISHES

Little silver fishes
Darting to and fro,
I can see you shining
As you come and go.

In the bright cool water
Merrily you play,

That is very pleasant
  On a sunny day.

But, when winter passes
  Through this pretty glen,
Little silver fishes,
  What do you do then ?

Lucy Diamond

THE FISHERS

When evening shadows in the sky
  Bring sleepy time for me,
The fishing vessels spread their sails
  To catch the breezes free,
And fishermen begin their work
  Upon the lonely sea.

Their little children sleep at home,
  But whether wind or rain,
The fishers cast the dripping nets,
  And haul with might and main.
All through the hours of dark they toil,
  Till daylight comes again.

O fishermen, you work for me
  Out on the waters deep,
And so I say a little prayer
  Before I go to sleep :
" O loving Father, in Thy care
  The strong, brave fishers keep."

Lucy Diamond

ROBIN'S SONG

SUCH a litter of leaves on the ground,
Oh! such a litter!
Not a leaf on the tree to be found:
The wind is so bitter!
And nothing to hear but the sound
Of my little twitter.

The fairies have made me a vest,
Velvet and rosy,
Like the glow of the sun in the west,
Or a pretty pink posy.
No wonder I'm singing my best,
So comfy and cosy!

Natalie Joan

LITTLE RAINDROPS

OH! where do you come from,
  You little drops of rain,
Pitter patter, pitter patter,
  Down the window-pane?

They won't let me walk
  And they won't let me play,
And they won't let me go
  Out of doors at all to-day.

They put away my playthings
  Because I broke them all,
And they locked up all my bricks,
  And took away my ball.

Tell me, little raindrops,
  Is that the way you play,
Pitter patter, pitter patter,
  All the rainy day?

They say I'm very naughty,
  But I've nothing else to do
But sit here at the window ;
  I should like to play with you.

The little raindrops cannot speak,
  But " pitter, patter, pat "
Means : " We can play on this side :
  Why can't you play on that ? "

Anne Hawkshaw

BINKIE AND ME

BINKIE and me, in the twilight time,
Creep up the stairs,
Me with my gun, and Binks with his growl,
  Hunting Bears.

Just at the darkest corner of all
A terrible big one lies ;
We hear him growling as we come by,
  See his eyes !

But I am a man, and Binkie's so brave,
We track him right home to his lair.
I shoot him dead, and Binkie he *growls* !
  We don't care !

When Dorothy came here to stay with us once,
She was as 'fraid as could be,
Though why she should mind, when I had my gun,
  I can't see !

Oh, the loveliest time in the day for me
Is when we two creep up the stairs ;
Me with my gun, and Binks with his growl,
  Hunting Bears.

Thora Stowell

SNOWDROPS

Little ladies, white and green,
  With your spears about you,
Will you tell us where you've been
  Since we lived without you ?

You are sweet, and fresh, and clean,
  With your pearly faces ;
In the dark earth where you've been
  There are wondrous places :

Yet you come again, serene,
  When the leaves are hidden ;
Bringing joy from where you've been
  You return unbidden—

Little ladies, white and green,
  Are you glad to cheer us ?
Hunger not for where you've been,
  Stay till Spring be near us !

Laurence Alma Tadema

THE MOON

Oh, look at the Moon ;
  She is shining up there.
Oh, Mother, she looks
  Like a lamp in the air !

Last week she was smaller,
  And shaped like a bow,
But now she's grown bigger,
  And round as an O.

Pretty Moon, pretty Moon,
  How you shine on the door,
And make it all bright
  On my nursery floor !

You shine on my playthings,
  And show me their place,
And I love to look up
  At your pretty bright face.

And there is a star
  Close by you, and maybe
That small twinkling star
  Is your little baby.

MY LITTLE DOG

I'LL never hurt my little dog,
  But stroke and pat his head;
I like to see him wag his tail,
  I like to see him fed.

Poor little thing, how very good,
  And very useful too;
For do you know that he will mind
  What he is bid to do?

Then I will never hurt my dog,
  And never give him pain,
But treat him kindly every day,
  And he'll love me again.

LITTLE ROBIN REDBREAST

LITTLE Robin Redbreast sat upon a tree,
Up went Pussy-cat, and down went he;
Down came Pussy-cat, and away Robin ran;
Says little Robin Redbreast, "Catch me if you
  can!"
Little Robin Redbreast jumped upon a wall,
Pussy-cat jumped after him and almost got a fall.
Little Robin chirp'd and sang, and what did Pussy
  say?
Pussy-cat said "Mew," and Robin jumped away.

THE STAR

TWINKLE, twinkle, little star!
How I wonder what you are,
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle all the night.

The dark blue sky you keep
And often thro' my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye
Till the sun is in the sky.

'Tis your bright and tiny spark
Lights the traveller in the dark;
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star!

Jane Taylor

WHERE?

WHERE do you come from, harebell blue,
In your fresh green bed, and your frock so new?
Out of the morning?—out of the dew?

Where do you come from, daffodil fair,
In your smock of green and your yellow hair?
Out of the sunshine?—out of the air?

Where do you come from, poppy, pray,
Decking the field with your bonnet gay?
Out of the sunset of yesterday?

Natalie Joan

ALL ASLEEP

SEE! the merry little Squirrel now has scrambled
to his nest,
And the funny, prickly hedgehog seeks a cosy place
to rest.
Mr. Frog has found a blanket in the pond so dark
and deep,
While the drowsy little Dormouse too, has safely
gone to sleep.

If I go to pay a visit to the house of Mr. Snail,
I shall find his doorway covered with a shining coat
of mail;
While at the very bottom of his home so dull and
big
Mr. Mole is hidden deeper than a little boy can
dig.

In the corner of the dark barn, where I almost fear
to tread,
Upside down the Bats are hanging from the rafters
overhead;
And my little friend the Tortoise, no—I cannot
find to-day;
'Neath the leaf-mould in the garden he is hidden
right away.

Lucy Diamond

HEIGH HO!

THERE was a little rose in a garden bed,
She had a green frock and a pretty pink head.
Heigh ho!
Let the winds blow.

There came a little bee, and he said: "Fair lady,
You live in a garden sweet and shady."
Heigh ho!
Let the winds blow.

"Fair sir," said the rose, "you bring warm weather,
Pray let us sing a gay song together."
Heigh ho!
Let the winds blow.

There came a little bird, and he said: "I'll stay
And sing a right merry song, if I may."
Heigh ho!
Let the winds blow.

There came a little girl, and she danced and said:
"I love my rose with the pretty pink head."
Heigh ho!
Let the winds blow.

She danced and she sang in the garden shady.
Good-bye, bird and bee; good-bye, rose-lady.
Heigh ho!
Let the winds blow.

Margaret Ashworth

NURSE'S SONG

When the voices of children are heard on the green,
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast,
And everything else is still.

"Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,
And the dews of night arise;
Come, come, leave off play, and let us away
Till the morning appears in the skies."

"No, no, let us play, for it is yet day,
And we cannot go to sleep;
Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,
And the hills are all covered with sheep."

"Well, well, go and play till the light fades
away,
And then go home to bed."
The little ones leapèd and shouted and laughed
And all the hills echoèd.

William Blake

LADY MOON

"Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving ?"
"Over the Sea."
"Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving ?"
"All that love me."
"Are you not tired with rolling, and never
Resting to sleep ?
Why look so pale and so sad, as for ever
Wishing to weep ?"
"Ask me not this, little child, if you love me ;
You are too bold ;
I must obey my dear Father above me,
And do as I'm told."
"Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving ?"
"Over the Sea."
"Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving ?"
"All that love me."

Lord Houghton

LITTLE TROTTY WAGTAIL

Little trotty wagtail, he went in the rain,
And twittering, tottering sideways he ne'er got
straight again.
He stooped to get a worm, and looked up to get a
fly,
And then he flew away ere his feathers they were
dry.

Little trotty wagtail, he waddled in the mud,
And left his little footmarks, trample where he would.
He waddled in the water-pudge, and waggle went his tail,
And chirrupt up his wings to dry upon the garden rail.

Little trotty wagtail, you nimble all about,
And in the dimpling water-pudge you waddle in and out;
Your home is nigh at hand, and in the warm pig-sty,
So, little Master Wagtail, I'll bid you a good-bye.

John Clare

GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD MORNING

A FAIR little girl sat under a tree,
Sewing as long as her eyes could see;
Then smoothed her work, and folded it right,
And said, "Dear Work! Good Night! Good Night!"

Such a number of rooks came over her head,
Crying, "Caw! caw!" on their way to bed:
She said, as she watched their curious flight,
"Little black things! Good Night! Good Night!"

The horses neighed, and the oxen lowed,
The sheep's "Bleat! bleat!" came over the road;
All seeming to say, with a quiet delight,
"Good little girl! Good Night! Good Night!"

She did not say to the Sun "Good Night!"
Though she saw him there like a ball of light;
She knew he had God's time to keep
All over the world, and never could sleep.

The tall pink foxglove bowed his head,
The violets curtsied and went to bed;

And good little Lucy tied up her hair,
And said on her knees, her favourite prayer.

And while on her pillow she softly lay,
She knew nothing more till again it was day,
And all things said to the beautiful sun,
"Good Morning! Good Morning! our work is
begun!"

Lord Houghton

THE FAIRY

O WHO is so merry, so merry, heigh ho!
As the light-hearted fairy, heigh ho!
He dances and sings
To the sound of his wings,
With a hey, and a heigh, and a ho!

O who is so merry, so airy, heigh ho!
As the light-headed fairy, heigh ho!
His nectar he sips
From the primrose's lips,
With a hey, and a heigh, and a ho!

O who is so merry, so wary, heigh ho!
As the light-footed fairy, heigh ho!
His night is the noon
And his sun is the moon,
With a hey, and a heigh, and a ho!

George Darley

WISHING

RING-TING! I wish I were a Primrose,
A bright yellow Primrose blowing in the Spring!
The stooping boughs above me,
The wandering bee to love me,
The fern and moss to creep across,
And the Elm-Tree for our King!

Nay—stay ! I wish I were an Elm-Tree,
A great lofty Elm-Tree, with green leaves gay !
  The winds would set them dancing,
  The sun and moonshine glancing,
The Birds would house among the boughs,
  And sweetly sing !

O—no ! I wish I were a Robin,
A Robin or a little Wren, everywhere to go ;
  Through forest, field, or garden,
  And ask no leave or pardon,
Till winter comes with icy thumbs
  To ruffle up our wing.

Well—tell ! Where should I fly to,
Where go to sleep in the dark wood or dell ?
  Before a day was over,
  Home comes the rover,
For a Mother's kiss,—sweeter this
  Than any other thing !

William Allingham

THE SHEPHERD

How sweet is the shepherd's sweet lot !
  From the morn to the evening he strays ;
He shall follow his sheep all the day,
  And his tongue shall be filled with praise.

For he hears the lamb's innocent call,
  And he hears the ewe's tender reply ;
He is watchful while they are in peace,
  For they know when their shepherd is nigh.

William Blake

THE FLOWERS

Daisies are neat,
Violets are sweet,
Sweet-peas flit-flutter
With wings to their feet.

The buttercup glistens,
He's cheerful and kind ;
The cuckoo-flower listens
To the song of the wind.

Agnes Grozier Herbertson

A JEWEL DAY

O Children, wake, for a fairy world
  Is waiting for you and me,
With gems aglow on the meadow grass,
  And jewels on every tree.

The hedgerows glitter, the dark woods shine
  In dresses of sparkling white,
For while we slumbered, the Ice Queen passed
  All over the earth last night.

Lucy Diamond

THINGS TO WEAR

If you wear a woven ring
  Made of grass,
You can hear the fairies sing
  As they pass ;
You can hear them rush and scurry
When they're rather in a hurry.

If you wear a daisy-chain
  Neat and strong,
You can hear the goblin train
  Rush along,

You can hear it hoot and whistle
As it dives beneath a thistle.

If you lace two grassy blades
  In your shoe,
You can dream of fairy glades,
  Fairies too.
If you've found a four-leaved clover,
You can dream this four times over!

Agnes Grozier Herbertson

A FLOWER

I SAW a flower beside the gate—
  It was at yester-noon—
It looked all lone and delicate,
  The colour of the moon;
It had a little shining eye
That smiled at me as I went by.

The flowers, Nurse says, have gone to sleep
  Because the winter's here;
She says there's hardly one will peep
  Before another year;
They sleep the winter through, it seems,
Because they have such pleasant dreams.

But one, I know, is rather late.
  It's sure as sure can be
There was a flower beside the gate;
  It smiled and looked at me;
I heard it laugh to hear me pass,
Like little bells inside the grass.

Agnes Grozier Herbertson

BABY SEED SONG

LITTLE brown brother, oh! little brown brother,
  Are you awake in the dark?
Here we lie cosily, close to each other:
  Hark to the song of the lark—
"Waken!" the lark says, "waken and dress you;
  Put on your green coats and gay,
Blue sky will shine on you, sunshine caress you—
  Waken! 'tis morning—'tis May!"

Little brown brother, oh! little brown brother,
  What kind of flower will you be?
I'll be a poppy—all white, like my mother;
  Do be a poppy like me.
What! you're a sun-flower? How I shall miss you
  When you're grown golden and high!
But I shall send all the bees up to kiss you;
  Little brown brother, good-bye.

E. Nesbit

A BOY'S SONG

WHERE the pools are bright and deep,
Where the grey trout lies asleep,
Up the river and over the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the blackbird sings the latest,
Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,
Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the mowers mow the cleanest,
Where the hay lies thick and greenest,
There to track the homeward bee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the hazel bank is steepest,
Where the shadow lies the deepest,

Where the clustering nuts fall free,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Why the boys should drive away
Little sweet maidens from the play,
Or love to banter and fight so well,
That's the thing I never could tell.

But this I know, I love to play,
Through the meadow, among the hay ;
Up the water and over the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

James Hogg

THE KNIGHT OF THE GOLDEN FEATHER

When Timothy sits in school he can see,
Out of the window, an apple tree,
And the mill and the pond and the dashing wheel.
And Timothy knows,
If only lessons were over and done,
He could be out there, and play in the sun.

Then he'd be a Knight, with his hobby horse,
And out in the world he would ride.
Of course there'd be dragons and wizards and ogres
and things,
And Timothy thinks
How he'd be the Knight of the Golden Feather,
And fight them all and the world together.

There'd be a Princess with Golden Hair,
And she'd be a prisoner high up there
In the apple-tree boughs, in a Castle of Glass.
And Timothy dreams
How he'd rescue her out of the old apple boughs,
And carry her home to her father's house.

And so by the window his dreams go by,
Beyond the mill and the trees and the sky ;

But lessons and spelling and sums go wrong,
And Timothy hears :
" You must stay in, Timothy, after school,
While the others go fishing the Miller's Pool."

It's a long, long day for a poor little Knight,
For lessons are things that must come right ;
But they always go wrong if you dream, you know.
And Timothy sees—
O poor little Knight of the Golden Feather !—
The others at play in the gay summer weather.

Next time I expect he will wiser be,
He'll fight those dragons of sums, you see ;
And Timothy knows
That he can run out when at last they're done,
Out and away to play in the sun.

Thora Stowell

HOBGOBLIN STEEPLE-JACKS

HAVE you heard what has happened in Teddybear
Town ?
The chimney had cracked, and was dirty, and
brown,
So they sent for the workman to clean it again
With a rope, and a ladder as long as a lane.
Hobgoblin steeple-jacks working night and day,
Hammered it and rammered it with bricks and clay !

The steeple-jacks came with their pulleys and poles,
And very soon filled up the cracks and the holes.
There were some who brought hammers and trowels
and picks,
And others who only brought ladders to fix.
Hobgoblin steeple-jacks working day and night,
Plastered it and mastered it and made all tight !

The one who was Foreman stood up on the top
And ordered the others to start or to stop ;

While two little Brownies were working the rope,
And pulling up buckets of soda and soap.
Hobgoblin steeple-jacks all the day were seen
Scrubbing it and rubbing it till it was clean!

Before they had finished, the rain had begun,
And drenched all the little folk watching the fun.
But Brownies don't mind when they're busy and gay,
So they finished the chimney and went for their pay.
Hobgoblin steeple-jacks working in the rain,
Whitened it and brightened it quite clean again!

Sedgwick Barnard

THE SONGS OF THE BIRDS

Let us sit down and listen! I never did hear
Such a number of voices all singing so clear:
There's the thrush and the blackbird; I like them the best,
Except in the winter, the little red-breast.

And there's Mr. Cuckoo; he's always the same,
He never seems tired of telling his name;
And there is the skylark, high up in the skies,
I cannot look at him; it dazzles my eyes.

And there goes the rook with his fine glossy coat,
For ever repeating his rookery note;
I could sit here and listen the whole summer long;
Every bush in the thicket is merry with song.

Ah! what have you got, Johnny Jones? Let us see;
A little bird dropped from its nest in the tree.
How it shivers and flutters and opens its beak,
And looks all about it as if it would speak!

It wants to be put in its warm nest again.
Do climb the tree, Johnny, and try if you can.
Ah, you've got it safe there ; now, quick, run away ;
It was a good thing that we came here to-day.

Mary Sewell

THE MAD GOBLIN

A Goblin sat on a tree-top high,
(How high ? Oh ! ever so high !)
His tall, straight cap, of a wonderful sheen,
Was almost as blue as the tree was green.
(And that was ? As blue as the sky !)

The Goblin played on a Fiddle-de-dee,
(What's that ? Well, I'm sure I don't know !)
His voice was as sweet as a crow's in June,
He had only one song and only one tune,
And he sang very loud and slow.

He suddenly plumped right off that tree,
(But why ? Well, because he did !)
But he came down just a minute too soon,
For he tumbled right into the setting moon,
And he slid, and he slid, and he slid—

Till he slid right into the Land of the Dumps,
(Where's that ? Oh ! goodness knows !)
But no one has ever seen him since then,
Though he'd soon have got back to the land of men
If he'd only followed his nose !

Thora Stowell

QUEEN MAB

A little fairy comes at night,
Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown,
With silver spots upon her wings,
And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand,
  And when a good child goes to bed
She waves her hand from right to left,
  And makes a circle round its head.

And then it dreams of pleasant things,
  Of fountains filled with fairy fish,
And trees that bear delicious fruit,
  And bow their branches at a wish :

Of arbours filled with dainty scents
  From lovely flowers that never fade,
Bright flies that glitter in the sun,
  And glow-worms shining in the shade ;

And talking birds with gifted tongues
  For singing songs and telling tales,
And pretty dwarfs to show the way
  Through fairy hills and fairy dales.

Thomas Hood

A FUNNY MAN

One day a funny kind of man
Came walking down the street.
He wore a shoe upon his head,
And hats upon his feet.

He raised the shoe and smiled at me,
His manners were polite ;
But never had I seen before
Such a funny sounding sight.

He said, " Allow me to present
Your Highness with a rose."
And taking out a currant bun
He held it to my nose.

I staggered back against the wall,
And then I answered, " Well !

I never saw a rose with such
A funny-looking smell."

He then began to sing a song,
And sat down on the ground;
You never heard in all your life
Such a funny feeling sound.

"My friend, why do you wear two hats
Upon your feet?" I said.
He turned the other way about,
And hopped home on his head.

Natalie Joan

WIND, MOON AND STARS

WIND said, "Little girl, come out and play awhile with me."
Moon said, "Little girl, wake up! I've come to look for you."
Stars said, "We're so lonely here, and want your company."
Mother said, "Now, *off* to bed!"—so what could Janie do?

Wind said, "Little girl, I'm here, crying in the night."
Moon said, "Little girl, I've lit my great big lamp for you."
Stars said, "We're all waiting just to see your face again."
Mother dear put out the light—so what could Janie do?

Wind all night long cried and cried, but Janie was a-sleeping.
Moon climbed up the sky and waited till the daylight grew.

Stars went whivering back to bed when the big
sun came peeping.
But Mother said, "Jane, go to sleep!"—so what
could Janie do?

Thora Stowell

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD

WYNKEN, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe—
Sailed on a river of crystal light,
Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going, and what do you wish?"
The old moon asked the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring-fish
That live in this beautiful sea;
Nets of silver and gold have we!"
Said Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song
As they rocked in the wooden shoe,
And the wind that sped them all night long
Ruffled the waves of dew.
The little stars were the herring-fish
That lived in that beautiful sea—
"Now cast your nets wherever you wish—
But never afeard are we";
So cried the stars to the fishermen three:
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

And all night long their nets they threw
For the fish in the twinkling foam—
Then down from the sky came the wooden shoe,
Bringing the fishermen home;
'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
As if it could not be;
And some folks thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea—
But I shall name you the fishermen three:
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

Wynken, Blynken, are two little eyes,
  And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
  Is a wee one's trundle-bed.
So shut your eyes while Mother sings
  Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
  As you rock in the misty sea,
  Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three;
    Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

Eugene Field

INFANT JOY

"I have no name;
I am but two days old."
What shall I call thee?
"I happy am,
Joy is my name."
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty joy!
Sweet joy, but two days old.
Sweet joy I call thee;
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while;
Sweet joy befall thee!

William Blake

THE LAMB

  Little Lamb, who made thee?
  Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,
By the stream, and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
  Little Lamb, who made thee?
  Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee :
He is calléd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild ;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee !
Little Lamb, God bless thee !

William Blake

THE SELLER OF STARS

I WISH that I knew the queer street,
The crooked wee street that goes
East of the Sun and West of the Moon,
And out where no wind blows—
Then I'd find the shop where the Seller of Stars
Sits and hammers behind the bars !

Stars he gives for the asking,
Starlight swords for the bold ;
Moons he sells for a penny or two,
Rounded and bright with gold ;
And broken silver of the sea he sells,
And the rain spears and the wind bells.

Wings he weaves for the fairies,
Gold of the sun you can buy,
And silver flowers of frost and dew,
Rainbows out of the sky ;
And delicate morning mist he sells,
And pretty new songs for whispering shells.

Oh, if I could find the dear street,
The darling wee street with his house,
I would buy a blackbird's whistle for you,
And for Johnny a talking mouse,

And a mermaid's tail to swim in the sea,
And dragon-fly wings for my Mummy and me!

I wish I could find the wee street,
That wanders up and down,
That is East of the Sun, West of the Moon,
And very near Twilight Town,
Where the Seller of Stars for a penny or two
Will sell your heart's desire to you.

Thora Stowell

THE WIMPSEY COBBLER

THE Wimpsey Cobbler has a house
As thimble-small and wise
As any fairy thing there is
Under the starry skies.
And there all night he works away,
Humpy and old and thin,
Cobbling the fairies' silver shoes
Till crowing cocks begin.
And there's no end to all the things
The Wimpsey Cobbler knows:
He'll take your shoes and patch them up
With the goldy heart of a rose;
With a star or two he'll buckle them,
And stitch them airily light,
With little delicate cobweb threads
And moonshine silver-white.

But now and then in his elfish way
He'll do the oddest things—
He'll send them back to you maybe
With little hidden wings.
And when they hear the fairy pipes
Off and away they'll be,
Off and away to the Cobbler's House
A-dancing merrily!
And when you go to fetch them back
He'll say they're hardly dry

From all the starry goldy dust
That tangled them in the sky.
And you'll have to coax, and tease, and plead,
And pay with a dream or two,
Before he'll pull off the pretty wings
And give them back to you.

But don't be feared of the Wimpsey Man,
For nobody understands
What beautiful fairy things he does
With a twist of his curly hands ;
And when you pass his fairy house,
So thimble-small and wise,
He'll always have a gift for you
Under the starry skies ;
He'll always have a smile for you,
Provided you're his friend ;
And you will be a happy child
With all the luck he'll send !

Thora Stowell

MY SHADOW

I HAVE a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see,
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head ;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow ;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepyhead,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

Robert Louis Stevenson

A BALLAD

A BEAUTIFUL maiden lived at a mill,
She sang and she laughed and she worked with a will;
But the Mayor of Gloucester was riding by,
And he caught a glance from her bright blue eye.
Humbledum.

The sails of the mill went whirring on,
The gold on the good Mayor's chariot shone;
The Mayor stepped out and strode to the door,
And the maiden stood on the powdery floor.
Humbledum.

THE MAYOR

O Miller, give me your lass so fine
To ride in this handsome coach of mine;
Tho' she is the maid of the mill on the down
She shall be Queen of Gloucester town!
Humbledum.

THE MILLER

Oh, who will waken me at dawn
  Or bake my bread so brown ?
Or brew the heavy nut-brown ale
  If you go off to town ?

THE MAID

The hind will bake thy bread for thee,
  The white bread and the brown :
The cock will crow to waken thee
  When I go off to town.

THE MILLER

The wealth of twenty sacks I'll give,
  And leave the mill to thee ;
And twenty ploughs to plough the down,
  If you will bide with me.

THE MAID

Not twenty sacks nor twenty mills,
  Nor ploughs to plough the down,
Will keep me from my own true love
  That dwells in Gloucester town.

Humbledum.

M. Horace Smith

LOST TIME

TIMOTHY took his time to school,
Plenty of time he took :
But some he lost in the tadpole pool,
And some in the stickle-back brook.
Ever so much in the linnet's nest,
And more on the five-barred gate—
Timothy took his time to school
But he lost it all and was late.

Timothy has a lot to do—
How shall it all be done ?

Why, he never got home till close on two,
Though he might have been back by one.
There's sums, and writing and spelling too,
And an apple tree to climb.
Timothy has a lot to do—
How shall he find the time ?

Timothy sought it high and low :
He looked in the tadpole pool
To see if they'd taken the time to grow
That he lost on the way to school.
He found the nest, and he found the tree,
And he found the gate he'd crossed,
But Timothy never shall find (ah me !)
The time that Timothy lost.

Ffrida Wolfe

A RHYME OF HARVEST

SEE ! The wide cornfields are shining like gold ;
Heavy the ears with the grain that they hold.
Cut them, O reapers, this bright autumn day,
Bind them, and carry, and stow them away.

See ! The slow waggon brings over the hill
Grain for the miller to grind in his mill.
Hurry, O miller, it must not be late,
Down in the town for the flour they wait.

See ! The kind baker in cap clean and white,
Busily working from morning till night,
Kneading and baking for you and for me
Bread for our breakfast and cakes for our tea.

Lucy Diamond

THE BLOSSOM

Merry, merry sparrow!
Under leaves so green
A happy blossom
Sees you, swift as arrow:
Seek your cradle narrow,
Near my bosom.

Pretty, pretty robin!
Under leaves so green
A happy blossom
Hears you sobbing, sobbing,
Pretty, pretty robin,
Near my bosom.

William Blake

SUMMER DUSK

Now may we follow on his curving flight,
The white owl mousing in the failing light:
And from the osiers in the river meads,
Hear the sedge-warbler, chiding in the reeds.

Pamela Tennant

MOON MAGIC

One day when Father and I had been
To sell our sheep at Berwick Green,
We reached the farm-house late at night,
A great moon rising round and bright.

Her strange beam shed on all around
Bewitched the trees, and streams, and ground,
Changing the willows beyond the stacks
To little old men with crouching backs.

To-day the sun was shining plain,
They all were pollarded willows again.
But at night—do you believe they're trees ?
They're little old men with twisted knees.

Pamela Tennant

THE ROAD

OUTSIDE our little garden gate, far over hill and down,
The broad white road, the long white road, goes winding to the town.
I often peep between the bars when I am tired of play,
And wish that I could follow it some happy summer day.

The grown folk pass beneath the trees that stand so straight and tall,
But I must stay at home and play, because I am so small,
And wait till I am big and strong, before I go to see
What lies along the great white road that beckons now to me.

Lucy Diamond

THE LITTLE WHITE ROAD

THE Little White Road climbs over the hill,
My feet they must follow, they cannot be still,
Must follow and follow, though far it may roam,
Oh, Little White Road, will you never come home ?

The hills they are patient and steadfast and wise,
They look o'er the valleys and up to the skies ;
But the Little White Road scrambles up them and over,
Oh, Little White Road, you are ever a rover !

I fain would go with you right down to the sea
Where a ship with white sails would be waiting
for me,
Go sailing and sailing to strange lands afar,
Where deserts and forests and lost cities are.

But when I grew weary of gipsying ways,
I'd sail home again for to end all my days
In my little grey cottage, beside the grey hill . . .
But you, Little Road, would be wandering still !

Thora Stowell

MORNING

THE Wind wakes in the garden,
Birds call and cry,
The red light of the dawning
Floods the Eastern sky.
Flowers lift dewy faces,
Grass is gemmed and green,
And spangled fairy cobwebs
On every bush are seen.
Sun at the bedroom window
Shines on the Little Beds.
" Wake up ! " he says, " it's morning ;
Wake up, you sleepy heads ! "

Thora Stowell

" I HAD A DOVE "

I HAD a dove, and the sweet dove died ;
And I have thought it died of grieving :
O, what could it grieve for ? Its feet were tied
With a silken thread of my own hand's weaving.

Sweet little red feet ! why should you die ?
Why should you leave me, sweet bird ? Why ?

You lived alone in the forest-tree,
Why, pretty thing! would you not live with me?
I kissed you oft and gave you white peas;
Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees?

John Keats

LULLABY

HUSH! the waves are rolling in,
White with foam, white with foam;
Father toils amid the din;
But Baby sleeps at home.

Hush! the winds roar hoarse and deep,—
On they come, on they come!
Brother seeks the wandering sheep;
But Baby sleeps at home.

Hush! the rain sweeps o'er the knowes,
Where they roam, where they roam;
Sister goes to seek the cows;
But Baby sleeps at home.

LAUGHING SONG

WHEN the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene;
When Mary, and Susan, and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing, "Ha, ha, he!"

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread:
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of "Ha, ha, he!"

William Blake

WRITTEN IN MARCH

THE cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,

The green field sleeps in the sun,
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest ;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising ;
There are forty feeding like one !

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill ;
The plough-boy is whooping anon, anon.
There's joy in the mountains ;
There's life in the fountains ;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing ;
The rain is over and gone !

William Wordsworth

A WIDOW BIRD

A WIDOW bird sat mourning for her love
Upon a wintry bough ;
The frozen wind crept on above,
The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
No flower upon the ground,
And little motion in the air
Except the mill-wheel's sound.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

THE ECHOING GREEN

The Sun does arise,
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the echoing Green.

Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say:
"Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys,
In our youth time were seen
On the echoing Green."

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening Green.

William Blake

BY THE MOON

By the Moon we sport and play,
With the night begins our day:
As we dance the dew doth fall,
Trip it little, urchins all:

Lightly as the little Bee,
Two by two, and three by three :
And about go we, and about go we.

" I do come about the copse,
Leaping upon flowers' tops :
Then I get upon a fly,
She carries me above the sky :
And trip and go."

" When a dew-drop falleth down,
And doth light upon my crown,
Then I shake my head and skip,
And about I trip.
Two by two, and three by three :
And about go we, and about go we."

Thomas Ravenscroft

GREAT, WIDE, BEAUTIFUL, WONDERFUL WORLD

Great, wide, beautiful, wonderful world,
With the wonderful water round you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast—
World, you are beautifully drest.

The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree ;
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the tops of the hills.

You friendly earth ! how far do you go,
With the wheat-fields that nod and the river that flow,
With cities and gardens, and cliffs, and isles,
And people upon you for thousands of miles ?

Ah, you are so great and I am so small,
I tremble to think of you, World, at all ;

And yet, when I said my prayers to-day,
A Whisper inside me seemed to say,
" You are more than the earth, though you are such a dot :
You can love and think, and the earth cannot ! "

William Brighty Rands

WHERE THE BEE SUCKS

WHERE the bee sucks, there suck I,
In a cowslip's bell I lie,
There I couch when owls do cry ;
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

William Shakespeare

SONG

SWEET and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea !
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me ;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon ;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon ;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon :
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

BABY

WHERE did you come from, baby dear ?
Out of the everywhere into here.

Where did you get those eyes so blue ?
Out of the sky as I came through.

What makes the light in them sparkle and spin ?
Some of the starry twinkles left in.

Where did you get that little tear ?
I found it waiting when I got here.

What makes your forehead so smooth and high ?
A soft hand stroked it as I went by.

What makes your cheek like a warm white rose ?
I saw something better than any one knows.

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss ?
Three angels gave me at once a kiss.

Where did you get this pearly ear ?
God spoke, and it came out to hear.

Where did you get those arms and hands ?
Love made itself into bonds and bands.

Feet, whence did you come, you darling things ?
From the same box as the cherubs' wings.

How did they all just come to be you ?
God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, you dear ?
God thought about you, and so I am here.

George MacDonald

A DREAM

Once a dream did weave a shade
O'er my Angel-guarded bed,
That an Emmet lost its way
Where on grass methought I lay.

Troubled, 'wildered, and forlorn,
Dark, benighted, travel-worn,
Over many a tangled spray,
All heart-broke I heard her say :

" O my children ! do they cry ?
Do they hear their father sigh ?
Now they look abroad to see :
Now return and weep for me."

Pitying, I dropped a tear :
But I saw a glow-worm near,
Who replied : " What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night ?

" I am set to light the ground,
While the beetle goes his round :
Follow now the beetle's hum ;
Little wanderer, hie thee home."

William Blake

MY SHIP AND I

Oh, it's I that am the captain of a tidy little ship—
Of a ship that goes a-sailing on the pond ;
And my ship it keeps a-turning all around and all about ;
But when I'm a little older, I shall find the secret out,
How to send my vessel sailing on beyond.

For I mean to grow as little as the dolly at the helm,
And the dolly I intend to come alive ;

And with him beside to help me, it's a-sailing I shall go—
It's a-sailing on the water, when the jolly breezes blow,
And the vessel goes a-divie-divie-dive.

Oh, it's then you'll see me sailing through the rushes and the reeds,
And you'll hear the water singing at the prow;
For beside the dolly sailor I'm to voyage and explore,
To land upon the island where no dolly was before,
And to fire the penny cannon in the bow.

Robert Louis Stevenson

THE NIGHT PIECE

Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
The shooting stars attend thee;
And the elves also,
Whose little eyes glow
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No Will-o'-the-wisp mislight thee,
Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee:
But on, on thy way,
Not making a stay,
Since ghost there's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber;
What though the moon does slumber?
The stars of the night
Will lend thee their light,
Like tapers clear, without number.

Robert Herrick

THE ROCK-A-BY LADY

The Rock-a-By Lady from Hushaby Street
  Comes stealing ; comes creeping ;
The poppies they hang from her head to her feet,
And each hath a dream that is tiny and fleet—
She bringeth her poppies to you, my sweet,
  When she findeth you sleeping !

There is one little dream of a beautiful drum—
  " Rub-a-dub ! " it goeth ;
There is one little dream of a big sugar-plum,
And lo ! thick and fast the other dreams come
Of pop-guns that bang, and tin tops that hum,
  And a trumpet that bloweth !

And dollies peep out of those wee little dreams
  With laughter and singing ;
And boats go a-floating on silvery streams,
And the stars peek-a-boo with their own misty gleams,
And up, up and up, where the Mother Moon beams,
  The fairies go winging !

Would you dream all these dreams that are tiny and fleet ?
  They'll come to you sleeping ;
So shut the two eyes that are weary, my sweet,
For the Rock-a-By Lady from Hushaby Street,
With poppies that hang from her head to her feet,
  Comes stealing ; comes creeping.

Eugene Field

ST. FRANCIS D'ASSISI'S SONG OF THE CREATURES

Great Lord and King of Earth and Sky and Sea,
Who yet can hear a little child like me,
Who gives us everything we ask and more,
These are the things I want to thank you for—

For Brother Sun, whose bright and welcome face
Brings light and colour to each dingy place ;
Who, in the golden rays he flashes down,
Reveals the shining glory of Thy crown.

For Sister Moon, whose splendour soft and white
Makes out-of-doors so beautiful at night.
For all the tiny silver stars on high,
A shower of sparkling snowflakes in the sky.

For Brother Wind, who sweeps the clouds away,
And cools my cheeks when I am hot with play.
For all the crisp, inviting open air
That carries life and freshness everywhere.

For Sister Water, precious, sweet and clean,
Who humbly serves a beggar and a queen ;
And who, where sea and sliding pebbles meet,
Comes rippling gently round my naked feet.

For Brother Fire, whose light and shadow falls
In merry dances on my nursery walls ;
And who, though very powerful and bold,
Will warm my fingers when they ache with cold.

For Mother Earth, so solid, firm and wide,
I could not move or shake her if I tried ;
Who bears the forests and the waving grass,
And little flowers that beckon as we pass.

For all kind people, wheresoe'er they live,
Who help each other, suffer and forgive ;
And who, with loving reverence, unite
In serving Thee, by trying to do right.

Jessie Pope

THE WINDMILL

BEHOLD! a giant am I!
  Aloft here in my tower,
  With my granite jaws I devour
The maize, and the wheat, and the rye,
  And grind them into flour.

I look down over the farms;
  In the fields of grain I see
  The harvest that is to be,
And I fling to the air my arms,
  For I know it is all for me.

I hear the sound of flails
  Far off, from the threshing-floors
  In barns, with their open doors,
And the wind, the wind in my sails,
  Louder and louder roars.

I stand here in my place
  With my foot on the rock below,
  And whichever way it may blow,
I meet it face to face
  As a brave man meets his foe.

And while we wrestle and strive,
  My master, the miller, stands
  And feeds me with his hands;
For he knows who makes him thrive,
  Who makes him lord of lands.

On Sundays I take my rest;
  Church-going bells begin
  Their low melodious din;
I cross my arms on my breast,
  And all is peace within.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

THE LOST DOLL

I ONCE had a sweet little doll, dears,
  The prettiest doll in the world ;
Her cheeks were so red and so white, dears,
  And her hair was so charmingly curled.
But I lost my poor little doll, dears,
  As I played in the heath one day ;
And I cried for her more than a week, dears ;
  But I never could find where she lay.

I found my poor little doll, dears,
  As I played in the heath one day ;
Folks say she is terribly changed, dears,
  For her paint is all washed away,
And her arms trodden off by the cows, dears,
  And her hair not the least bit curled :
Yet for old sakes' sake she is still, dears,
  The prettiest doll in the world.

Charles Kingsley

THE LAMP-LIGHTER

MY tea is nearly ready and the sun has left the sky ;
It's time to take the window to see Leerie going by ;
For every night at tea-time and before you take your seat,
With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the street.

Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to sea,
And my papa's a banker and as rich as he can be ;
But I, when I am stronger and can choose what I'm to do,
O, Leerie, I'll go round at night and light the lamps with you.

For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door ;
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more ;
And oh ! before you hurry by with ladder and with light,
O, Leerie, see a little child and nod to him to-night !

Robert Louis Stevenson

ESCAPE AT BEDTIME

The lights from the parlour and kitchen shone out
Through the blinds and the windows and bars ;
And high overhead and all moving about,
There were thousands of millions of stars,
There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree,
Nor of people in Church or the Park,
As the crowds of the stars that looked down upon me,
And that glittered and winked in the dark.

The Dog and the Plough, and the Hunter, and all,
And the star of the sailor, and Mars,
These shone in the sky, and the pail by the wall,
Would be half full of water and stars.
They saw me at last, and they chased me with cries,
And they soon had me packed into bed ;
But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes,
And the stars going round in my head.

Robert Louis Stevenson

THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER

I

LITTLE cowboy, what have you heard,
  Up on the lonely rath's[1] green mound ?
Only the plaintive yellow bird
  Sighing in sultry fields around,
Chary, chary, chary, chee-ee !—
Only the grasshopper and the bee !—
    " Tip-tap, rip-rap,
    Tick-a-tack-too !
  Scarlet leather, sewn together,
    This will make a shoe.
  Left, right, pull it tight ;
    Summer days are warm ;
  Underground in winter,
    Laughing at the storm ! "
Lay your ear close to the hill.
Do you not catch the tiny clamour,
Busy click of an elfin hammer,
Voice of the Lepracaun[2] singing shrill
  As he merrily plies his trade ?
      He's a span
      And a quarter in height.
Get him in sight, hold him tight,
      And you're a made
        Man !

II

You watch your cattle the summer day,
Sup on potatoes, sleep in the hay ;
  How would you like to roll in your carriage,
  Look for a duchess's daughter in marriage ?
Seize the shoemaker—then you may !
  " Big boots a-hunting,
  Sandals in the hall,
White for a wedding-feast,
  Pink for a ball.
This way, that way,
  So we make a shoe ;

[1] Hill-side. [2] Fairy Shoemaker.

Getting rich every stitch,
  Tick-tack-too ! "
Nine-and-ninety treasure-crocks
This keen miser-fairy hath,
Hid in mountains, woods and rocks,
Ruin and round-tow'r, cave and rath,
  And where the cormorants build ;
  From times of old
  Guarded by him ;
  Each of them fill'd
  Full to the brim
    With gold.

III

I caught him at work one day, myself,
  In the castle-ditch, where foxglove grows,—
A wrinkled, wizen'd, and bearded elf,
  Spectacles stuck on his pointed nose,
Silver buckles to his hose,
Leather apron—shoe in his lap—
  " Rip-rap, tip-tap,
  Tick-tack-too !
  (A grasshopper on my cap !
    Away the moth flew !)
  Buskins for a fairy prince,
    Brogues for his son—
  Pay me well, pay me well,
    When the job is done ! "
The rogue was mine, beyond a doubt,
I stared at him ; he stared at me ;
" Servant, Sir ! " " Humph ! " says he,
  And pull'd a snuff-box out.
He took a long pinch, look'd better pleased,
  The queer little Lepracaun ;
Offer'd the box with a whimsical grace,—
Pouf ! he flung the dust in my face,
    And, while I sneezed,
      Was gone !

William Allingham

A SONG ABOUT MYSELF

THERE was a naughty Boy,
  A naughty boy was he,
He would not stop at home,
  He could not quiet be—
    He took
    In his Knapsack
    A Book
    Full of vowels
    And a shirt
    With some towels—
    A slight cap
    For night cap—
    A hair brush,
    Comb ditto,
    New stockings
    For old ones
    Would split O !
    This knapsack
    Tight at 'a back
    He rivetted close
  And followed his nose
    To the North
    To the North,
  And followed his nose
    To the North.

There was a naughty Boy,
  And a naughty boy was he,
For nothing would he do
  But scribble poetry—
    He took
    An inkstand
    In his hand
    And a Pen
    Big as ten
    In the other,
    And away
    In a Pother
    He ran

To the mountains
And fountains
And ghostes
And witches
And ditches
And wrote
In his coat
When the weather
Was cool,
Fear of gout
And without
When the weather
Was warm—
O the charm
When we choose
To follow one's nose
To the North
To the North,
To follow one's nose
To the north!

There was a naughty Boy,
And a naughty boy was he,
He kept little fishes
In washing tubs three
In spite
Of the might
Of the Maid
Nor afraid
Of his Granny-good—
He often would
Hurly burly
Get up early
And go
By hook or crook
To the brook,
And bring home
Miller's thumb,
Tittlebat
Not over fat,
Minnows small
As the stall

Of a glove,
Not above
The size
Of a nice
Little Baby's
Little fingers—
O he made—
'Twas his trade—
Of fish a pretty Kettle,
A Kettle,
A Kettle,
Of fish a pretty Kettle,
A Kettle!

There was a naughty Boy,
And a naughty boy was he,
He ran away to Scotland
The people for to see—
There he found
That the ground
Was as hard,
That a yard
Was as long,
That a song
Was as merry,
That a cherry
Was as red—
That lead
Was as weighty,
That fourscore
Was as eighty,
That a door
Was as wooden
As in England—
So he stood in his shoes
And he wondered,
He wondered,
He stood in his shoes
And he wondered.

John Keats

THE TIGER

TIGER, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry ?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes ?
On what wings dare he aspire ?
What the hand dare seize the fire ?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart ?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet ?

What the hammer ? What the chain ?
In what furnace was thy brain ?
What the anvil ? What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp ?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see ?
Did He who made the lamb make thee ?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry ?

William Blake

PIPPA'S SONG

THE year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn ;
Morning's at seven ;
The hill-side's dew-pearled ;
The lark's on the wing ;
The snail's on the thorn :
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world.

Robert Browning

PART II

"O FOR A BOOK"

O FOR a book and a shady nook,
  Either in-doors or out;
With the green leaves whispering overhead,
  Or the street cries all about;
Where I may read all at my ease,
  Both of the new and old;
For a jolly good book whereon to look,
  Is better to me than gold.

THE PEDLAR'S CARAVAN

I WISH I lived in a caravan,
With a horse to drive, like a pedlar-man!
Where he comes from nobody knows,
Or where he goes to, but on he goes!

His caravan has windows two,
And a chimney of tin, that the smoke comes
  through;
He has a wife, with a baby brown,
And they go riding from town to town.

Chairs to mend, and delf to sell!
He clashes the basins like a bell;
Tea-trays, baskets ranged in order,
Plates, with alphabets round the border!

The roads are brown, and the sea is green,
But his house is like a bathing-machine ;
The world is round, and he can ride,
Rumble and slash, to the other side !

With the pedlar-man I should like to roam,
And write a book when I came home ;
All the people would read my book,
Just like the Travels of Captain Cook !

William Brighty Rands

TINKER'S FIRES

Down in the lane the tinker's fire
Glows like a poppy, red and wild.
The tinker, with his wife and child,
Sleeps there beside its wavering spire.

The tinker's house is wide and high ;
His roof is gemmed by moon and stars ;
Green boughs are his tall window bars ;
His bed is curtained by the sky.

The wild wind harps strange melodies ;
But, to night's magic deaf and blind,
Heedless of moon or keening wind,
He sleeps, beneath the pitying trees.

Thora Stowell

THE MILLER'S SONG

Full many a night in the clear moonlight
Have I wandered by valley and down,
Where owls fly low, and hoot as they go—
The white-wing'd owl, and the brown.
For it's up and away ere the dawn of the day,
When the glow-worm shines in the grasses,
And the dusk lies cool on the reed-set pool,
And the night wind passes.

Full many a day have I found my way
Where the long road winds round the hill,
Where the wind blows free, on a juniper lea,
To the tune and the clank of a mill.
For the miller's a man who must work while he can
With the rye, and the barley growing,
While the slow wheels churn, and the great sails
turn,
To the fresh wind, blowing.

Pamela Tennant

THE MILLER OF THE DEE

THERE dwelt a miller hale and bold
Beside the river Dee;
He wrought and sang from morn to night,
No lark more blithe than he;
And this the burden of his song
For ever used to be,—
"I envy nobody, no, not I,
And nobody envies me!"

"Thou'rt wrong, my friend!" said old King Hal,
"Thou'rt wrong as wrong can be;
For could my heart be light as thine,
I'd gladly change with thee.
And tell me now what makes thee sing
With voice so loud and free,
While I am sad, though I'm the King,
Beside the river Dee?"

The miller smiled and doff'd his cap:
"I earn my bread," quoth he;
"I love my wife, I love my friends,
I love my children three;
I owe no penny I cannot pay;
I thank the river Dee,
That turns the mill that grinds the corn,
To feed my babes and me."

"Good friend," said Hal, and sigh'd the while,
"Farewell! and happy be;

But say no more, if thou'dst be true,
  That no one envies thee.
Thy mealy cap is worth my crown,—
  Thy mill my kingdom's fee!
Such men as thou are England's boast,
  O miller of the Dee!"

Charles Mackay

THE CHILD MUSICIAN

He had played for his lordship's levée,
  He had played for her ladyship's whim,
Till the poor little head was heavy,
  And the poor little brain would swim.

And the face grew peaked and eerie,
  And the large eyes strange and bright,
And they said—too late—"He is weary!
  He shall rest for, at least, to-night!"

But at dawn, when the birds were waking,
  As they watched in the silent room,
With a sound of a strained cord breaking,
  A something snapped in the room.

'Twas a string of his violoncello,
  And they heard him stir in his bed:—
"Make room for a tired little fellow,
  Kind God!"—was the last he said.

Austin Dobson

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
  A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
  Stood on our storming day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
  Legs wide, arms locked behind,

As if to balance the prone brow
  Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused, " My plans
  That soar, to earth my fall,
Let once my army-leader Lannes
  Waver at yonder wall."—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
  A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping ; nor bridle drew
  Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
  And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy :
  You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
  Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
  Was all but shot in two.

" Well," cried he, " Emperor, by God's grace
  We've got you Ratisbon !
The Marshal's in the market-place,
  And you'll be there anon,
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
  Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him ! " The Chief's eye flashed ; his plans
  Soared up again like fire.

The Chief's eye flashed ; but presently
  Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
  When her bruised eaglet breathes :
" You're wounded ! " " Nay," his soldier's pride
  Touched to the quick, he said :
" I'm killed, Sire ! " And, his Chief beside,
  Smiling, the boy fell dead.

Robert Browning

SONG OF THE WOODEN-LEGGED FIDDLER

I LIVED in a cottage adown in the West
When I was a boy, a boy;
But I knew no peace and I took no rest,
Though the roses nigh smothered my snug little nest;
For the smell of the sea
Was much rarer to me,
And the life of a sailor was all my joy.

Chorus—*The life of a sailor was all my joy!*

My mother she wept, and she begged me to stay
Anchored for life to her apron-string,
And soon she would want me to help wi' the hay;
So I bided her time, then I flitted away
On a night of delight in the following spring;
With a pair of stout shoon
And a seafaring tune
And a bundle and stick in the light of the moon,
Down the long road
To Portsmouth I strode,
To fight like a sailor for country and king.

Chorus—*To fight like a sailor for country and king.*

And now that my feet are turned homeward again
My heart is still crying Ahoy! Ahoy!
And my thoughts are still out on the Spanish main
A-chasing the frigates of France and Spain,
For at heart an old sailor is always a boy;
And his nose will still itch
For the powder and pitch
Till the days when he can't tell t'other from which,
Nor a grin o' the guns from a glint o' the sea,
Nor a skipper like Nelson from lubbers like me.

Chorus—*Nor a skipper like Nelson from lubbers like me.*

Ay! Now that I'm old I'm as bold as the best,
And the life of a sailor is all my joy;
Though I've swapped my leg
For a wooden peg
And my head is as bald as a new-laid egg,
The smell of the sea
Is like victuals to me,
And I think in the grave I'll be crying Ahoy!
For, though my old carcass is ready to rest,
At heart an old sailor is always a boy.

Chorus—*At heart an old sailor is always a boy.*

Alfred Noyes

OFF THE GROUND

THREE jolly Farmers
Once bet a pound
Each dance the others would
Off the ground.
Out of their coats
They slipped right soon,
And neat and nicesome
Put each his shoon.
One—Two—Three!
And away they go,
Not too fast,
And not too slow;
Out from the elm-tree's
Noonday shadow,
Into the sun
And across the meadow.
Past the schoolroom,
With knees well bent,
Fingers a-flicking,
They dancing went.
Up sides and over,
And round and round,
They crossed click-clacking
The Parish bound,

By Tupman's meadow
They did their mile,
Tee-to-tum
On a three-barred stile.
Then straight through Whipham,
Downhill to Week,
Footing it lightsome,
But not too quick,
Up fields to Watchet,
And on through Wye,
Till seven fine churches
They'd seen skip by—
Seven fine churches,
And five old mills,
Farms in the valley,
And sheep on the hills ;
Old Man's Acre
And Dead Man's Pool
All left behind,
As they danced through Wool.
And Wool gone by,
Like tops that seem
To spin in sleep
They danced in dream :
Withy—Wellover—
Wassop—Wo—
Like an old clock
Their heels did go.
A league and a league
And a league they went,
And not one weary,
And not one spent,
And lo, and behold !
Past Willow-cum-Leigh
Stretched with its waters
The great green sea.
Says Farmer Bates,
'I puffs and I blows,
What's under the water,
Why, no man knows !'
Says Farmer Giles,
'My mind comes weak,

And a good man drownded
Is far to seek.'
But Farmer Turvey,
On twirling toes,
Ups with his gaiters,
And in he goes :
Down where the mermaids
Pluck and play
On their twangling harps
In a sea-green day ;
Down where the mermaids,
Finned and fair,
Sleek with their combs
Their yellow hair . . .
Bates and Giles
On the shingle sat,
Gazing at Turvey's
Floating hat.
But never a ripple
Nor bubble told
Where he was supping
Off plates of gold.
Never an echo
Rilled through the sea
Of the feasting and dancing
And minstrelsy.
They called—called—called :
Came no reply :
Nought but the ripples'
Sandy sigh.
Then glum and silent
They sat instead,
Vacantly brooding
On home and bed,
Till both together
Stood up and said :—
' Us knows not, dreams not,
Where you be,
Turvey, unless
In the deep blue sea ;
But axcusing silver—
And it comes most willing—

Here's us two paying
Our forty shilling ;
For it's sartin sure, Turvey,
Safe and sound,
You danced us square, Turvey,
Off the ground ! '

Walter de la Mare

WIDDICOMBE FAIR

" Tom Pearse, Tom Pearse, lend me your gray mare,"
All along, down along, out along lee,
" For I want for to go to Widdicombe Fair,
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all."
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

" And when shall I see again my gray mare ? "
All along, down along, out along lee,
" By Friday soon, or Saturday noon,
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all."
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

Then Friday came and Saturday noon,
All along, down along, out along lee.
But Tom Pearse's old mare hath not trotted home,
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

So Tom Pearse he got up to the top o' the hill,
All along, down along, out along lee.
And he seed his old mare down a-making her will,
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,

Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

Tom Pearse's old mare her took sick and her died,
All along, down along, out along lee;
And Tom he sat down on a stone, and he cried
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

But this isn't the end o' this shocking affair,
All along, down along, out along lee.
Nor, though they be dead, of the horrid career
Of Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

When the wind whistles cold on the moor of a night,
All along, down along, out along lee,
Tom Pearse's old mare doth appear, gashly white,
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

And all the long night be heard skirling and groans,
All along, down along, out along lee,
From Tom Pearse's old mare in her rattling bones,
And from Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk,
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

THE SONG OF THE WESTERN MEN

A GOOD sword and a trusty hand !
  A merry heart and true !
King James's men shall understand
  What Cornish lads can do.

And have they fixed the where and when ?
  And shall Trelawney die ?
Then twenty thousand Cornish men
  Will know the reason why !

Out spake their captain brave and bold,
  A merry wight was he :
" If London Tower were Michael's Hold,
  We'll set Trelawney free !

" We'll cross the Tamar, land to land,
  The Severn is no stay,
With ' one and all,' and hand in hand,
  And who shall bid us nay ?

" And when we come to London Wall,
  A pleasant sight to view,
Come forth ! come forth ! ye cowards all,
  Here's men as good as you !

" Trelawney he's in keep and hold,
  Trelawney he may die ;
But twenty thousand Cornish bold
  Will know the reason why ! "

Robert Stephen Hawker

THE HONOUR OF BRISTOL

ATTEND you and give ear awhile,
  And you shall understand,
Of a battle fought on the high seas
  By a ship of brave command :
That fight it was so famous
  That all men's hearts did fill

And made them cry "To sea,
With the *Angel Gabriel.*"

That lusty ship of Bristol
Sailed out right gallantly
Against the foes of England,
Her strength with them to try:
"Would we with them might meet,
We fain would greet them well;
We would play a noble bout
With our *Angel Gabriel.*"

They had no sooner spoken,
But straight appeared in sight
Three lusty Spanish vessels
Of doughty force and might;
With sternest resolution
They thought our men to quell,
And vowed to make a prize
Of our *Angel Gabriel.*

Then first came up their Admiral
Themselves for to advance;
In her she bore full forty-eight
Pieces of ordinance.
The next that then came near us
Was their Vice-Admiral,
Which shot most furiously down
On our *Angel Gabriel.*

Our Captain to our Master said,
"Take courage, Master bold."
The Master to the seamen said,
"Stand fast, my hearts of gold."
The Gunner unto all the rest,
"Brave hearts, be valiant:—well
Let us fight in the defence
Of our *Angel Gabriel.*"

We gave them first a broadside
Which tore their mast asunder,

And shot the bow-sprit from their ship,
  Which made them Spaniards wonder :
And made them cry aloud
  With one voice, like a bell,
" Help ! help ! or else we're sunk
  By their *Angel Gabriel.*"

Yet desperately they boarded us
  For all our valiant shot.
Three score of their best fighting men
  Upon our deck there got.
But straight at their first entrance
  Full thirty did we kill,
And thus we cleared the decks
  Of our *Angel Gabriel.*

And then their three ships boarded us
  Again with might and main,
But still our valiant Englishmen
  Cried out, " A fig for Spain ! "
Though seven times they boarded us,
  We still received them well,
And made them feel the force
  Of our *Angel Gabriel.*

Seven hours this fight continued,
  Till many men lay dead,
And with the streams of Spanish blood
  The sea was coloured red.
Five hundred of their sailors died
  Without a funeral knell,
And many more were maimed
  By the *Angel Gabriel.*

Then, looking on these bloody spoils,
  The rest made haste away :
For why ?—they saw it was no use
  Much longer for to stay.
So they sped away to Cadiz,
  And there they still must dwell ;
For they never again will dare to meet
  Our *Angel Gabriel.*

We had within our English ship
  But only three men slain,
And five men hurt, the which I hope
  Will soon be well again.
At Bristol we were landed,
  And let us praise God well
That thus hath blessed our Bristol men
  And our *Angel Gabriel.*

Old Ballad

ALL'S WELL

DESERTED by the waning moon,
When skies proclaim night's cheerless noon,
On tower, on fort, on tented ground,
The sentry walks his lonely round;
And should a footstep haply stray
Where caution marks the guarded way—
"Who goes there? Stranger, quickly tell."
"A friend." "The Word." "Good night";
  "All's well."

Or sailing on the midnight deep,
When weary messmates soundly sleep,
The careful watch patrols the deck
To guard the ship from foes or wreck;
And while his thoughts oft homewards veer,
Some friendly voice salutes his ear—
"What cheer? Brother, quickly tell."
"Above." "Below." "Good night"; "All's
  well."

Thomas Dibdin

HOMEWARD BOUND

HEAD the ship for England!
  Shake out every sail!
Blithe leap the billows,
  Merry sings the gale.
Captain, work the reck'ning;
  How many knots a day?

Round the world and home again,
  That's the sailor's way!

We've traded with the Yankees,
  Brazilians and Chinese;
We've laughed with dusky beauties
  In shade of tall palm-trees;
Across the Line and Gulf-stream—
  Round by Table Bay—
Everywhere and home again,
  That's the sailor's way!

Nightly stands the North Star
  Higher on our bow;
Straight we run for England;
  Our thoughts are in it now.
Jolly time with friends ashore,
  When we've drawn our pay!—
All about and home again,
  That's the sailor's way!

Tom will to his parents,
  Jack will to his dear,
Joe to wife and children,
  Bob to pipes and beer;
Dicky to the dancing-room
  To hear the fiddles play;—
Round the world and home again,
  That's the sailor's way!
Round the world and home again,
  That's the sailor's way!

William Allingham

FAME

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
  To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
  Is worth an age without a name.

Sir Walter Scott

THE captain stood on the carronade: "First lieutenant," says he,
"Send all my merry men aft here, for they must list to me;
I haven't the gift of the gab, my sons—because I'm bred to the sea;
That ship there is a Frenchman, who means to fight with we.
And odds bobs, hammer and tongs, long as I've been to sea,
I've fought 'gainst every odds—but I've gain'd the victory!

"That ship there is a Frenchman, and if we don't take *she*,
'Tis a thousand bullets to one, that she will capture *we*;
I haven't the gift of the gab, my boys; so each man to his gun;
If she's not mine in half an hour, I'll flog each mother's son.
For odds bobs, hammer and tongs, long as I've been to sea,
I've fought 'gainst every odds—and I've gain'd the victory!"

We fought for twenty minutes, when the Frenchman had enough;
"I little thought," said he, "that your men were of such stuff";
Our captain took the Frenchman's sword, a low bow made to *he*;
"I haven't the gift of the gab, monsieur, but polite I wish to be.
And odds bobs, hammer and tongs, long as I've been to sea,
I've fought 'gainst every odds—and I've gain'd the victory!"

Our captain sent for all of us : "My merry men," said he,
"I haven't the gift of the gab, my lads, but yet I thankful be ;
You've done your duty handsomely, each man stood to his gun ;
If you hadn't, you villains, as sure as day, I'd have flogged each mother's son.
For odds bobs, hammer and tongs, as long as I'm at sea,
I'll fight 'gainst every odds—and I'll gain the victory ! "

Captain Marryat

ADMIRALS ALL

EFFINGHAM, Grenville, Raleigh, Drake,
Here's to the bold and free !
Benbow, Collingwood, Byron, Blake,
Hail to the Kings of the Sea !
Admirals all, for England's sake,
Honour be yours and fame !
And honour, as long as waves shall break,
To Nelson's peerless name !

Admirals all, for England's sake,
Honour be yours and fame !
And honour, as long as waves shall break,
To Nelson's peerless name !

Essex was fretting in Cadiz Bay
With the galleons fair in sight ;
Howard at last must give him his way,
And the word was passed to fight.
Never was schoolboy gayer than he,
Since holidays first began :
He tossed his bonnet to wind and sea,
And under the guns he ran.

Drake nor devil nor Spaniard feared,
Their cities he put to the sack ;

He singed His Catholic Majesty's beard,
  And harried his ships to wrack.
He was playing at Plymouth a rubber of bowls
  When the great Armada came ;
But he said, " They must wait their turn, good souls,"
  And he stopped, and finished the game.

Fifteen sail were the Dutchmen bold,
  Duncan he had but two :
But he anchored them fast where the Texel shoaled
  And his colours aloft he flew.
" I've taken the depth to a fathom," he cried,
  " And I'll sink with a right good will,
For I know when we're all of us under the tide
  My flag will be fluttering still."

Splinters were flying above, below,
  When Nelson sailed the Sound :
" Mark you, I wouldn't be elsewhere now,"
  Said he, " for a thousand pound ! "
The Admiral's signal bade him fly,
  But he wickedly wagged his head,
He clapped the glass to his sightless eye,
  And " I'm damned if I see it," he said.

Admirals all, they said their say,
  (The echoes are ringing still) ;
Admirals all, they went their way
  To the haven under the hill.
But they left, as a kingdom none can take,
  The realm of the circling sea,
To be ruled by the rightful sons of Blake
  And the Rodneys yet to be.

  Admirals all, for England's sake,
    Honour be yours and fame !
  And honour, as long as waves shall break,
    To Nelson's peerless name !

Sir Henry Newbolt

DRAKE'S DRUM

DRAKE he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below ?)
Slung atween the round-shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below ?)
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
" Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low ;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below ?)
Slung atween the round-shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe ;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin'
They shall find him ware an' wakin,' as they found him long ago !

Sir Henry Newbolt

HAWKE

In seventeen hundred and fifty-nine,
When Hawke came swooping from the West,
The French King's Admiral with twenty of the line
Was sailing forth, to sack us, out of Brest.
The ports of France were crowded, the quays of France a-hum
With thirty thousand soldiers marching to the drum,
For bragging time was over and fighting time was come
When Hawke came swooping from the West.

'Twas long past noon of a wild November day
When Hawke came swooping from the West;
He heard the breakers thundering in Quiberon Bay,
But he flew the flag for battle, line abreast.
Down upon the quicksands roaring out of sight
Fiercely beat the storm-wind, darkly fell the night,
But they took the foe for pilot and the cannon's glare for light
When Hawke came swooping from the West.

The Frenchmen turned like a covey down the wind
When Hawke came swooping from the West;
One he sank with all hands, one he caught and pinned,
And the shallows and the storm took the rest.
The guns that should have conquered us they rusted on the shore,
The men that would have mastered us they drummed and marched no more,
For England was England, and a mighty brood she bore
When Hawke came swooping from the West.

Sir Henry Newbolt

THE FIGHTING TÉMÉRAIRE

It was eight bells ringing,
  For the morning watch was done,
And the gunner's lads were singing,
  As they polished every gun.
It was eight bells ringing,
And the gunner's lads were singing,
For the ship she rode a-swinging,
  As they polished every gun.

Oh! to see the linstock lighting,
  Téméraire! Téméraire!
Oh! to hear the round-shot biting,
  Téméraire! Téméraire!
Oh! to see the linstock lighting,
And to hear the round-shot biting,
For we're all in love with fighting
  On the Fighting Téméraire.

It was noontide ringing,
  And the battle just begun,
When the ship her way was winging,
  As they loaded every gun.
It was noontide ringing
When the ship her way was winging,
And the gunner's lads were singing
  As they loaded every gun.

There'll be many grim and gory,
  Téméraire! Téméraire!
There'll be few to tell the story,
  Téméraire! Téméraire!
There'll be many grim and gory,
There'll be few to tell the story,
But we'll all be one in glory
  With the Fighting Téméraire.

There's a far bell ringing
  At the setting of the sun,
And a phantom voice is singing
  Of the great days done.

There's a far bell ringing,
And a phantom voice is singing
Of renown for ever clinging
To the great days done.

Now the sunset breezes shiver,
Téméraire! Téméraire!
And she's fading down the river,
Téméraire! Téméraire!
Now the sunset breezes shiver,
And she's fading down the river,
But in England's song for ever
She's the Fighting Téméraire.

Sir Henry Newbolt

THE LAST BUCCANIER

Oh England is a pleasant place for them that's rich and high,
But England is a cruel place for such poor folks as I;
And such a port for mariners I ne'er shall see again
As the pleasant Isle of Avès, beside the Spanish Main.

There were forty craft in Avès that were both swift and stout,
All furnished well with small arms and cannons round about;
And a thousand men in Avès made laws so fair and free
To choose their valiant captains and obey them loyally.

Thence we sailed against the Spaniard with his hoards of plate and gold,
Which he wrung with cruel tortures from Indian folk of old;
Likewise the merchant captains, with hearts as hard as stone,
Who flog men and keel-haul them, and starve them to the bone.

Oh the palms grew high in Avès, and fruits that
shone like gold,
And the colibris and parrots they were gorgeous to
behold ;
And the negro maids to Avès from bondage fast
did flee,
To welcome gallant sailors, a-sweeping in from sea.

Oh sweet it was in Avès to hear the landward breeze,
A-swing with good tobacco in a net between the
trees,
With a negro lass to fan you, while you listened to
the roar
Of the breakers on the reef outside, that never
touched the shore.

But Scripture saith, an ending to all fine things
must be ;
So the King's ships sailed on Avès, and quite put
down were we.
All day we fought like bulldogs, but they burst the
booms at night ;
And I fled in a piragua, sore wounded, from the
fight.

Nine days I floated starving, and a negro lass beside,
Till for all I tried to cheer her, the poor young thing
she died ;
But as I lay a-gasping, a Bristol sail came by,
And brought me home to England here, to beg
until I die.

And now I'm old and going—I'm sure I can't
tell where ;
One comfort is, this world's so hard, I can't be worse
off there :
If I might but be a sea-dove, I'd fly across the main,
To the pleasant Isle of Avès, to look at it once again.

Charles Kingsley

"How many?" said our good captain.
"Twenty sail and more."
We were homeward bound,
Scudding in a gale with our jib towards the Nore.
Right athwart our tack
The foe came thick and black,
Like storm-birds and foul weather—you might count them by the score.

The *Betsy Jane* did slack
To see the game in view;
They knew the Union Jack,
And the tyrant's flag we knew!
Our Captain shouted, "Clear the decks!" and the bosun's whistle blew.

Then our gallant captain,
With his hand he seized the wheel,
And pointed with his stump to the middle of the foe.
"Hurrah, lads, in we go!"
(You should hear the British cheer,
Fore and aft.)
"There are twenty sail," sang he,
"But little *Betsy Jane* bobs to nothing on the sea!"
(You should hear the British cheer,
Fore and aft.)

"See yon ugly craft
With the pennon at her main!
Hurrah, my merry boys,
There goes the *Betsy Jane*!"
(You should hear the British cheer,
Fore and aft.)

The foe, he beats to quarters, and the Russian bugles sound,
And the little *Betsy Jane*, she leaps upon the sea.
"Port and starboard!" cried our captain;
"Pay it in, my hearts!" sang he;

"We're old England's sons,
And we'll fight for her to-day!"
(You should hear the British cheer,
Fore and aft.)
"Fire away!"
In she runs,
And her guns
Thunder round.

Sydney Dobell

THE KNIGHT'S LEAP AT ALTENAHR

"So the foeman has fired the gate, men of mine;
And the water is spent and done?
Then bring me a cup of the red Ahr wine—
I never shall drink but this one.

"And reach me my harness, and saddle my horse,
And lead him me round to the door:
He must take such a leap to-night perforce
As horse never took before.

"I have lived by the saddle for years a score;
And if I must die on tree—
The old saddle-tree which has borne me of yore
Is the properest timber for me.

"I have lived my life, I have fought my fight,
I have drunk my share of wine;
From Trier to Cöln there was never a knight
Lived a merrier life than mine.

"So now to show bishop, and burgher, and priest,
How the Altenahr hawk can die:
If they smoke the old falcon out of his nest,
He must take to his wings and fly."

He harnessed himself by the clear moonshine,
And he mounted his horse at the door;

And he took such a pull of the red Ahr wine
  As man never took before.

He spurred the old horse, and he held him tight,
  And he leapt him out over the wall;
Out over the cliff, out into the night,
  Three hundred feet of fall.

They found him next morning below in the glen,
  And never a bone in him whole—
But Heaven may yet have more mercy than men
  On such a bold rider's soul.

Charles Kingsley

CREÇY

At Creçy by Somme in Ponthieu,
  High up on a windy hill,
A mill stands out like a tower,
  King Edward stands on the mill.
The plain is seething below,
  As Vesuvius seethes with flame,
But O! not with fire, but gore,
Earth incarnadined o'er,
  Crimson with shame and with fame.
To the King run the messengers crying,
"Thy son is hard pressed to the dying!"
  "Let alone; for to-day will be written in story
  To the great world's end, and for ever:
  So, let the boy have the glory!"

Erin and Gwalia there
  With England are ranked against France;
Outfacing the oriflamme red,
  The red dragons of Merlin advance;
As a harvest in autumn renewed,
  The lances bend over the fields;
Snow thick our arrow-heads white
Level the foe as they light:
  Knighthood to yeomanry yields:

Proud heart, the King watches, as higher
Goes the blaze of the battle, and nigher ;
" To-day is a day will be written in story
To the great world's end, and for ever !
Let the boy alone have the glory ! "

Harold at Senlac-on-Sea,
By Norman arrow laid low
When the shield wall was breach'd by the shaft,
Thou art avenged by the bow !
Chivalry ! name of romance !
Thou art henceforth but a name ;
Weapon that none can withstand,
Yew in the Englishman's hand,
Flight-shaft unerring in aim !
As a lightning-struck forest the foemen
Shiver down to the stroke of the bowmen ;
" O to-day is a day will be written in story
To the great world's end, and for ever !
So, let the boy have the glory ! "

Pride of Liguria's shore,
Genoa wrestles in vain ;
Vainly Bohemia's King
King-like is laid with the slain.
The Blood-lake is wiped out in blood.
The shame of the centuries o'er ;
Where the pride of the Norman had sway,
The lions lord over the fray.
The legions of France are no more :
The Prince to his father kneels lowly :
His is the battle—his wholly !
" For to-day is a day will be written in story
To the great world's end, and for ever !
So, let him have the spurs and the glory ! "

Francis Turner Palgrave

SIR HUGH AND THE SWANS

THE wintry nights in Flanders
  Lie thick about the grass ;
We stole between the sentinels,
  They never saw us pass.

The mist was blue on field and fen,
  And ridged the dykes with white ;
The camp-fires of the soldiers
  Burned holes into the night.

They could not see us through the mirk ;
  We saw them in the glow.
A price was on our either head,
  And stealthy did we go.

We crept along the inner banks
  Close to the waters grey—
We reached the castle at dawn, the castle
  Where Max in prison lay.

(We blew the golden trumpets all
  For joy, a year agone :
" Long live the king o' the Romans ! "
  The people cried as one.

Now, for the king in prison,
  There's two will dare to die :
There's Hugh o' the Rose, the Jester,
  Sir Hugh o' the Rose, and I.)

We came upon the castle moat
  As the dawn was weak and grey ;
" There's still an hour," quoth Hugh o' the Rose,
" An hour till break of day.

" Give me the files, the muted files,
  Give me the rope to fling ;
I'll swim to the prison window,
  And hand them to the king.

" I'll swim to the castle and back, Sir John,
  Before the morn is light,

And we'll both lie hid in the rushes here
  Till we take the boat to-night."

We tied the files, we tied the rope,
  In a little leather sack ;
Sir Hugh struck off from the mirky bank,
  The satchel on his back.

I watched him cleave the wan water—
  A bold swimmer was he.
My heart beat high in my bosom,
  For I thought the king was free.

I watched him shoot the middle stream
  And reach the other side—
" Fling up the rope ! " the king cried out,
  That never should have cried.

The sun uprist beyond the dyke ;
  It was a deadly gleam.
The startled swans that sleep i' the moat
  Began to whirr and scream.

Woe's me ! that saw them stretch their necks
  And hiss, as traitors do ;
I saw them arch their evil wings
  And strike and stun Sir Hugh.

The king looked out o' the window bars,
  And he was sad belike ;
But I could not see my lord the king
  For the drowned face in the dyke.

The sleepy warders woke and stirred,
  " The swans are mad in the moat ! "
I lifted up Sir Hugh o' the Rose
  And laid him in the boat.

I made him a sark of rushes,
  With stones at the feet and head . . .
In the deepest dyke of Flanders
  Sir Hugh o' the Rose lies dead.

Mary F. Robinson

ANDRE'S RIDE

When André rode to Pont-du-lac
With all his raiders at his back,
Mon Dieu, the tumult in the town!
Scarce clanged the great portcullis down
Ere in the sunshine gleamed his spears
And up marched all his musketeers,
And far and fast in haste's array
Sped men to fight and priests to pray;
In every street a barricade
Of aught that came to hand was made;
From every house a man was told,
Nor quittance given to young or old;
Should youth be spared, or age be slack,
When André rode to Pont-du-lac?

When André rode to Pont-du-lac
With all his ravening reiver-pack,
The mid lake was a frozen road
Unbending to the cannon's load;
No warmth the sun had as it shone;
The kine were stalled, the birds were gone;
Like wild things seemed the shapes of fur
With which was every street astir,
And over all the huddling crowd
The thick breath hung a solid cloud;
Roof, road, and river—all were white;
Men moved benumbed by day,—by night
The boldest durst not bivouac,
When André rode to Pont-du-lac.

When André rode to Pont-du-lac
We scarce could stem his swift attack;
A halt, a cheer, a bugle-call,—
Like wild cats they were up the wall;
But still as each man won the town
We tossed him from the ramparts down;
And when at last the stormers quailed
And back th' assailants shrank assailed,
Like wounded wasps, that still could sting,
Or tigers, that had missed their spring,

They would not fly, but turned at bay,
And fought out all the dying day.
Sweet saints ! it was a crimson track
That André left by Pont-du-lac.

When André rode to Pont-du-lac,
Said he, " A troop of girls could sack
This huckster town that hugs its hoard,
But fears to face a warrior's sword."
It makes my blood warm now to know
How soon Sir Cockerel ceased to crow,
And how 'twas my sure dagger-point
In André's harness found a joint,
For I, who now am old, was young,
And strong the thews were, now unstrung,
And deadly though our danger then,
I would those days were back again ;
Ah, would to God the days were back
When André rode to Pont-du-lac.

Arthur H. Beesley

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he ;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three ;
" Good speed ! " cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew ;
" Speed ! " echoed the wall to us galloping through ;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other ; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by side, never changing our place ;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes where aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and, cried Joris, "Stay, spur!—
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is—friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

Robert Browning

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE

The charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade!
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of Russians,
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley—and stayed;
For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred were riding by
When the points of the Russian lances arose in the sky,

And he called, "Left wheel into line!" and they
wheeled and obeyed.
Then he looked at the host that had halted he knew
not why,
And he turned half round, and he bade his trum-
peter sound
To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as he waved
his blade
To the gallant three hundred whose glory will never
die.
"Follow," and up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
Followed the Heavy Brigade.

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and the might
of the fight!
Thousands of horsemen had gathered there on the
height,
With a wing pushed out to the left and a wing to
the right.
And who shall escape if they close? but he dashed
up alone
Through the great grey slope of men,
Swayed his sabre, and held his own
Like an Englishman there and then;
All in a moment followed with force
Three that were next in their fiery course,
Wedged themselves in between horse and horse,
Fought for their lives in the narrow gap they had
made—
Four amid thousands! and up the hill, up the hill,
Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the Heavy
Brigade.

Fell like a cannon-shot,
Burst like a thunderbolt,
Crashed like a hurricane,
Broke through the mass from below,
Drove through the midst of the foe,
Plunged up and down, to and fro,
Rode flashing blow upon blow,
Brave Inniskillens and Greys
Whirling their sabres in circles of light!

And some of us, all in amaze,
Who were held for a while from the fight,
And were only standing at gaze,
When the dark-muffled Russian crowd
Folded its wings, from the left and the right,
And rolled them around like a cloud,—
O mad for the charge and the battle were we,
When our own good redcoats sank from sight,
Like drops of blood in a dark grey sea,
And we turned to each other, whispering, all dismayed,
"Lost are the gallant three hundred of Scarlett's Brigade."

"Lost one and all," were the words
Muttered in our dismay;
But they rode like Victors and Lords
Through the forest of lances and swords
In the heart of the Russian hordes,
They rode, or they stood at bay—
Struck with the sword-hand and slew,
Down with the bridle-hand drew
The foe from the saddle and threw
Underfoot there in the fray—
Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock
In the wave of a stormy day;
Till suddenly shock upon shock
Staggered the mass from without,
Drove it in wild disarray,
For our men gallopt up with a cheer and a shout,
And the foemen surged, and wavered and reeled
Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out of the field,
And over the brow and away.

Glory to each and to all and the charge that they made!
Glory to all the three hundred, and all the Brigade!

Alfred Lord Tennyson

THE PIPES AT LUCKNOW

Pipes of the misty moorlands,
  Voice of the glens and hills;
The droning of the torrents,
  The treble of the rills!
Not the braes of broom and heather,
  Nor the mountains dark with rain,
Nor maiden bower, nor border tower,
  Have heard your sweetest strain!

Dear to the Lowland reaper,
  And plaided mountaineer—
To the cottage and the castle
  The Scottish pipes are dear.
Sweet sounds the ancient pibroch
  O'er mountain, loch, and glade;
But the sweetest of all music
  The pipes at Lucknow played.

Day by day the Indian tiger
  Louder yelled, and nearer crept;
Round and round the jungle-serpent
  Near and nearer circles swept.
"Pray for rescue, wives and mothers!
Pray to-day!" the soldier said;
"To-morrow, death's between us
And the wrong and shame we dread."

Oh, they listened, looked, and waited,
  Till their hope became despair;
And the sobs of low bewailing
  Filled the pauses of their prayer.
Then up spake a Scottish maiden,
  With her ear unto the ground:
"Dinna ye hear it? Dinna ye hear it?
  The pipes o' Havelock sound!"

Hushed the wounded man his groaning;
  Hushed the wife her little ones;
Alone they heard the drum-roll
  And the roar of Sepoy guns.

But to sounds of home and childhood
  The Highland ear was true ;
As her mother's cradle-crooning
  The mountain pipes she knew.

Like the march of soundless music
  Through the vision of the seer,
More of feeling than of hearing,
  Of the heart than of the ear,
She knew the droning pibroch,
  She knew the Campbell's call,
" Hark ! hear ye no' MacGregor's,
  The grandest o' them all ! "

Oh, they listened, dumb and breathless,
  And they caught the sound at last ;
Faint and far beyond the Goomtee
  Rose and fell the piper's blast.
Then a burst of wild thanksgiving
  Mingled woman's voice and man's :
" God be praised ! The march of Havelock !
  The piping of the clans ! "

Louder, nearer, fierce as vengeance,
  Sharp and shrill as swords at strife,
Came the wild MacGregor's clan-call,
  Stinging all the air to life.
But when the far-off dust-cloud
  To plaided legions grew,
Full tenderly and blithesomely
  The pipes of rescue blew !

Round the silver domes of Lucknow,
  Moslem mosque and Pagan shrine,
Breathed the air to Britons dearest,
  The air of Auld Lang Syne.
O'er the cruel roll of war-drums
  Rose that sweet and homelike strain ;
And the tartan clove the turban,
  As the Goomtee cleaves the plain.

Dear to the corn-land reaper
  And plaided mountaineer—

To the cottage and the castle
  The piper's song is dear.
Sweet sounds the Gaelic pibroch
  O'er mountain, glen, and glade;
But the sweetest of all music
  The pipes at Lucknow played.

John Greenleaf Whittier

THE HIGHWAYMAN

Part One

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding—
  Riding—riding—
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

He'd a French cocked hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,
A coat of claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up to the thigh!
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,
  His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there

But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable wicket creaked
Where Tim the ostler listened ; his face was white and peaked ;
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's red-lipped daughter;
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say—

" One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light ;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way."

He rose upright in the stirrups ; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement ! His face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast ;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
(O, sweet black waves in the moonlight !)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the West.

He did not come in the dawning ; he did not come at noon ;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A red-coat troop came marching—
Marching—marching—
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed ;
Two of them knelt at the casement, with muskets at their side !
There was death at every window,
And hell at one dark window ;
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that he would ride.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest ;
They had bound a musket beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast !
"Now keep good watch !" and they kissed her. She heard the dead man say—
Look for me by moonlight ;
Watch for me by moonlight ;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way !

She twisted her hands behind her ; but all the knots held good !
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood !
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,

Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at last was hers!

The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath her breast,
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight,
Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.

Tlot-tlot; *tlot-tlot*! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance! Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding,
Riding, riding!
The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up, straight and still.

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot*, in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him—with her death.

He turned; he spurred to the westward; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er musket, drenched with her own red blood!

Not till the dawn he heard it, and slowly blanched to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him, and his rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat;
When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with the bunch of lace at his throat.

. . . . . .

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding—
Riding—Riding—
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard;
And he taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

Alfred Noyes

TARTARY

If I were Lord of Tartary,
  Myself and me alone,
My bed should be of ivory,
  Of beaten gold my throne ;
And in my court should peacocks flaunt,
And in my forests tigers haunt,
And in my pools great fishes slant
  Their fins athwart the sun.

If I were Lord of Tartary,
  Trumpeters every day
To every meal should summon me,
  And in my courtyard bray ;
And in the evenings lamps would shine
Yellow as honey, red as wine,
While harp and flute and mandoline,
  Made music sweet and gay.

If I were Lord of Tartary,
  I'd wear a robe of beads,
White, and gold, and green they'd be—
  And clustered thick as seeds ;
And ere should wane the morning-star,
I'd don my robe and scimitar,
And zebras seven should draw my car
  Through Tartary's dark glades.

Lord of the fruits of Tartary,
  Her rivers silver-pale !
Lord of the hills of Tartary,
  Glen, thicket, wood and dale !
Her flashing stars, her scented breeze,
Her trembling lakes, like foamless seas,
Her bird-delighting citron-trees
  In every purple vale !

Walter de la Mare

THE MERMAN

I

Who would be
A merman bold
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne ?

II

I would be a merman bold ;
I would sit and sing the whole of the day ;
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power ;
But at night I would roam abroad and play
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower ;
And holding them back by their flowing locks
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
Laughingly, laughingly ;
And then we would wander away, away
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,
Chasing each other merrily.

III

There would be neither moon nor star ;
But the wave would make music above us afar—
Low thunder and light in the magic night—
Neither moon nor star.
We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,
Call to each other and whoop and cry
All night, merrily, merrily ;
They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells,
Laughing and clapping their hands between,
All night, merrily, merrily ;
But I would throw to them back in mine
Turkis and agate and almondine :
Then leaping out upon them unseen

I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
  Laughingly, laughingly,
Oh ! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;
We would live merrily, merrily.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SONG—THE OWL

When cats run home and light is come,
  And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
  And the whirring sail goes round,
  And the whirring sail goes round ;
    Alone and warming his five wits,
    The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
  And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
  Twice or thrice his roundelay,
  Twice or thrice his roundelay ;
    Alone and warming his five wits,
    The white owl in the belfry sits.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

OF TREES

Winter Willow is ruddy red,
Pollarded in the withy-bed,
Summer Willow is green and grey,
Bending white on a windy day.

Autumn Beech is a stately creature,
Well she made her pact with Nature ;
While she casts her russet gown,
She wears her new buds, sharp and brown.

If Birch beside the Broom be found,
Her satin is the more renown'd,
And yet of seasonable trees,
There is a better one than these.

For Chestnut goes to meet the Spring
While Oak and Ash are lingering.
He holds his boughs, when Winter's by,
Like altar candles to the sky.

He makes it his to be the first,
The East may blow, his bonds must burst,
And leader of the budding rout,
In one green stride the Chestnut's out.

Pamela Tennant

THE EAGLE

He clasps the crag with crooked hands ;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies :—
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

THE CAGED SKYLARK

The skylark sang from its cage in the town,
  Of fallow and upland, the scene of its birth.
Shadows of clouds on the rolling Down,
  The flower-filled floor of the fragrant Earth.
    Slanting silver of sun-lit rain,
    And the long, low line of the open plain.

Hearts city-pent in a waking dream
  Turned to remembrance of wind-stirred trees,
Sheep-bells, wattled, beside the stream,
  And the huffle and push of a clover breeze.
    Turned, and beholding the crowded street,
    Longed for the wideness of whispering wheat.

Pamela Tennant

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat :
Come hither, come hither, come hither,
Here shall he see no enemy
But Winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the Sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets :
Come hither, come hither, come hither,
Here shall he see no enemy
But Winter and rough weather.

William Shakespeare

WEATHERS

THIS is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I;
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly:
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside at "The Travellers' Rest,"
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the south and west,
And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I;
When beeches drip on browns and duns,
And thresh, and ply;
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

Thomas Hardy

THE WAR SONG OF DINAS VAWR

THE mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter;
We therefore deemed it meeter
To carry off the latter.
We made an expedition;
We met a host and quelled it;
We forced a strong position,
And killed the men who held it.

On Dyfed's richest valley,
Where herds of kine were browsing,
We made a mighty sally,
To furnish our carousing.
Fierce warriors rushed to meet us;
We met them, and o'erthrew them:

They struggled hard to beat us :
But we conquered them, and slew them.

As we drove our prize at leisure,
The king marched forth to catch us :
His rage surpassed all measure,
But his people could not match us.
He fled to his hall-pillars ;
And, ere our force we led off,
Some sacked his house and cellars,
While others cut his head off.

We there, in strife bewildering,
Spilt blood enough to swim in :
We orphaned many children,
And widowed many women.
The eagles and the ravens
We glutted with our foemen :
The heroes and the cravens,
The spearmen and the bowmen.

We brought away from battle,
And much their land bemoaned them,
Two thousand head of cattle,
And the head of him who owned them :
Ednyfed, King of Dyfed,
His head was borne before us ;
His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,
And his overthrow, our chorus.

Thomas Love Peacock

SUMMER

WINTER is cold-hearted,
  Spring is yea and nay,
Autumn is a weather-cock
  Blown every way :
Summer days for me
When every leaf is on its tree ;

When Robin's not a beggar,
  And Jenny Wren's a bride,
And larks hang singing, singing, singing,
  Over the wheat fields wide,
  And anchored lilies ride,
And the pendulum spider
  Swings from side to side,

And blue-black beetles transact business
  And gnats fly in a host,
And furry caterpillars hasten
  That no time be lost,
And moths grow fat and thrive,
And ladybirds arrive.

Before green apples blush,
  Before green nuts embrown,
Why, one day in the country
  Is worth a month in town ;
  Is worth a day and a year
Of the dusty, musty, lag-last fashion
That days drone elsewhere.

Christina Rossetti

THE NIGHT BIRD

A-FLOATING, a-floating
Across the sleeping sea,
All night I heard a singing bird
Upon the topmast tree.

" Oh, came you off the isles of Greece,
Or off the banks of Seine ;
Or off some tree in forests free,
Which fringe the Western Main ? "

" I came not off the Old World,
Nor yet from off the New—
But I am one of the birds of God
Which sing the whole night through."

" Oh, sing, and wake the dawning—
Oh whistle for the wind ;
The night is long, the current strong,
My boat it lags behind."

" The current sweeps the Old World,
The current sweeps the New ;
The wind will blow, the dawn will glow
Ere thou hast sailed them through."

Charles Kingsley

FOLDING THE FLOCKS

SHEPHERDS all, and maidens fair,
Fold your flocks up ; for the air
'Gins to thicken, and the sun
Already his great course hath run.
See the dew-drops how they kiss
Every little flower that is :
Hanging on their velvet heads,
Like a rope of crystal beads.
See the heavy clouds low falling,
And bright Hesperus down calling
The dead night from under ground,
At whose rising, mists unsound,
Damps and vapours fly apace,
Hov'ring o'er the smiling face
Of these pastures, where they come,
Striking dead both bud and bloom ;
Therefore, from such danger, lock
Ev'ry one of his loved flock ;
And let your dogs lie loose without,
Lest the wolf come as a scout
From the mountain, and, ere day,
Bear a lamb, or kid away ;
Or the crafty, thievish fox
Break upon your simple flocks :
To secure yourself from these
Be not too secure in ease ;
Let one eye his watches keep
While the other eye doth sleep ;
So shall you good shepherds prove,
And deserve your master's love.
Now good-night ! may sweetest slumber
And soft silence fall in number
On your eye-lids : so, farewell ;
Thus I end my evening knell.

John Fletcher

"TO SEA"

To sea, to sea! The calm is o'er;
The wanton water leaps in sport,
And rattles down the pebbly shore;
The dolphin wheels, the sea-cows snort,
And unseen Mermaids' pearly song
Comes bubbling up, the weeds among.
Fling broad the sail, dip deep the oar:
To sea, to sea! The calm is o'er.

To sea, to sea! our wide-winged bark
Shall billowy cleave its sunny way,
And with its shadow, fleet and dark,
Break the caved Tritons' azure day,
Like mighty eagle soaring light
O'er antelopes on Alpine height.
The anchor heaves, the ship swings free,
The sails swell full: To sea, to sea!

Thomas Lovell Beddoes

A SPRING SONG

As I was a-wandering ae morning in Spring,
I heard a merry ploughman sae sweetly to sing;
And as he was singing thae words he did say,
"There's nae life like the ploughman's in the month
o' sweet May.

"The laverock in the morning she'll rise frae her nest,
And mount in the air with the dew on her breast;
And wi' the merry ploughman she'll whistle and sing,
And at night she'll return to her nest back again."

Robert Burns

IN THE TRAIN

As we rush, as we rush in the train,
  The trees and the houses go wheeling back,
But the starry heavens above the plain
  Come flying on our track.

Oh the beautiful stars of the sky,
  The silver doves of the forest of Night,
Over the dull earth swarm and fly
  Companions of our flight.

We will rush ever on without fear;
  Let the goal be far, the flight be fleet!
For we carry the Heavens with us, dear,
  While the Earth slips from our feet!

James Thomson

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
  But O heart! heart! heart!
    O the bleeding drops of red!
      Where on the deck my Captain lies,
        Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
  Here, Captain! dear father!
    This arm beneath your head!
      It is some dream that on the deck
        You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult, O shores! and ring, O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

Walt Whitman

THE PLOUGH

ABOVE yon sombre swell of land
Thou see'st the dawn's grave orange hue,
With one pale streak like yellow sand,
And over that a vein of blue.

The air is cold above the woods;
All silent is the earth and sky,
Except with his own lonely moods,
The blackbird holds a colloquy.

Over the broad hill creeps a beam,
Like hope that gilds a good man's brow;
And now ascends the nostril-stream
Of stalwart horses come to plough.

Ye rigid Ploughmen, bear in mind,
Your labour is for future hours:
Advance—spare not—nor look behind—
Plough deep and straight with all your powers!

Richard Henry Horne

DREAM-PEDLARY

If there were dreams to sell,
  What would you buy ?
Some cost a passing bell ;
  Some a light sigh,
That shakes from Life's fresh crown
Only a rose-leaf down.

If there were dreams to sell,
Merry and sad to tell,
And the crier rung the bell,
  What would you buy ?

A cottage lone and still,
  With bowers nigh,
Shadowy, my woes to still,
  Until I die.
Such pearl from Life's fresh crown
Fain would I shake me down.
Were dreams to have at will,
This would best heal my ill,
  This would I buy.

Thomas Lovell Beddoes

A HYMN IN PRAISE OF NEPTUNE

Of Neptune's empire let us sing,
At whose command the waves obey ;
To whom the rivers tribute pay,
Down the high mountains sliding :
To whom the scaly nation yields
Homage for the crystal fields
  Wherein they dwell :
And every sea-god pays a gem
Yearly out of his wat'ry cell
To deck great Neptune's diadem.

The Tritons dancing in a ring
Before his palace gates do make

The water with their echoes quake,
Like the great thunder sounding :
The sea-nymphs chant their accents shrill,
And the sirens, taught to kill
  With their sweet voice,
Make ev'ry echoing rock reply
Unto their gentle murmuring noise
The praise of Neptune's empery.

Thomas Campion

ABOU BEN ADHEM

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold :—

Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the Presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou ?"—The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answer'd, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one ?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still ; and said, "I pray thee then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow men."

The Angel wrote and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And show'd the names whom love of God had bless'd,
And lo ! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

Leigh Hunt

PIBROCH OF DONUIL DHU

Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
  Pibroch of Donuil,
Wake thy wild voice anew,
  Summon Clan Conuil.
Come away, come away,
  Hark to the summons!
Come in your war array,
  Gentles and commons.

Come from deep glen, and
  From mountain so rocky;
The war-pipe and pennon
  Are at Inverlochy.
Come every hill-plaid, and
  True heart that wears one,
Come every steel blade, and
  Strong hand that bears one.

Leave untended the herd,
  The flock without shelter;
Leave the corpse uninterr'd,
  The bride at the altar;
Leave the deer, leave the steer,
  Leave nets and barges;
Come with your fighting gear,
  Broadswords and targes.

Come as the winds come, when
  Forests are rended,
Come as the waves come, when
  Navies are stranded:
Faster come, faster come,
  Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page and groom,
  Tenant and master.

Fast they come, fast they come;
  See how they gather!
Wide waves the eagle plume,
  Blended with heather.

Cast your plaids, draw your blades,
  Forward, each man, set!
Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
  Knell for the onset.

Sir Walter Scott

SONG OF THE SEA

A WET sheet and a flowing sea,
  A wind that follows fast,
And fills the white and rustling sail,
  And bends the gallant mast;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
  While, like the eagle free,
Away the good ship flies, and leaves
  Old England on the lee.

O for a soft and gentle wind!
  I heard a fair one cry;
But give to me the snoring breeze
  And white waves heaving high.
And white waves heaving high, my lads,
  The good ship tight and free,—
The world of waters is our home,
  And merry men are we.

There's tempest in yon horned moon,
  And lightning in yon cloud;
And hark the music, mariners!
  The wind is piping loud;
The wind is piping loud, my boys,
  The lightning flashing free—
While the hollow oak our palace is,
  Our heritage the sea.

Allan Cunningham

THE SCARECROW

All winter through I bow my head
  Beneath the driving rain ;
The North wind powders me with snow
  And blows me black again ;
At midnight under a maze of stars
  I flame with glittering rime,
And stand, above the stubble, stiff
  As mail at morning-prime.
But when that child, called Spring, and all
  His host of children, come,
Scattering their buds and dew upon
  These acres of my home,
Some rapture in my rags awakes ;
  I lift void eyes and scan
The skies for crows, those ravening foes
  Of my strange master, Man.
I watch him striding lank behind
  His clashing team, and know
Soon will the wheat swish body high
  Where once lay sterile snow ;
Soon shall I gaze across a sea
  Of sun-begotten grain,
Which my unflinching watch hath sealed
  For harvest once again.

Walter de la Mare

TEWKESBURY ROAD

It is good to be out on the road, and going one
knows not where,
Going through meadow and village, one knows not
whither nor why;
Through the grey light drift of the dust, in the
keen cool rush of the air,
Under the flying white clouds, and the broad blue
lift of the sky;

And to halt at the chattering brook, in the tall
green fern at the brink
Where the harebell grows, and the gorse, and the
foxgloves purple and white;
Where the shy-eyed delicate deer troop down to
the pools to drink
When the stars are mellow and large at the coming
on of the night.

O, to feel the warmth of the rain, and the homely
smell of the earth,
Is a tune for the blood to jig to, a joy past power
of words;
And the blessed green comely meadows seem all
a-ripple with mirth
At the lilt of the shifting feet and the dear wild
cry of the birds.

John Masefield

A CINQUE PORT

Below the down the stranded town
  What may betide forlornly waits,
With memories of smoky skies,
  When Gallic navies crossed the straits ;
When waves with fire and blood grew bright,
And cannon thundered through the night.

With swinging stride the rhythmic tide
  Bore to the harbour barque and sloop ;
Across the bar the ship of war,
  In castled stern and lanterned poop,
Came up with conquests on her lee,
The stately mistress of the sea.

Where argosies have wooed the breeze,
  The simple sheep are feeding now ;
And near and far across the bar
  The ploughman whistles at the plough ;
Where once the long waves washed the shore,
Larks from their lowly lodgings soar.

Below the down the stranded town
  Hears far away the rollers beat ;
About the wall the seabirds call ;
  The salt wind murmurs through the street ;
Forlorn the sea's forsaken bride
Awaits the end that shall betide.

John Davidson

THE LOSS OF THE BIRKENHEAD

RIGHT on our flank the crimson sun went down;
The deep sea rolled around in dark repose;
When, like the wild shriek from some captured town,
A cry of women rose.

The stout ship Birkenhead lay hard and fast,
Caught without hope upon a hidden rock;
Her timbers thrilled as nerves, when through them passed
The spirit of that shock.

And ever, like base cowards, who leave their ranks
In danger's hour, before the rush of steel,
Drifted away, disorderly, the planks
From underneath her keel.

Confusion spread, for though the coast seemed near
Sharks hovered thick along that white sea-brink.
The boats could hold?—not all—and it was clear
She was about to sink.

"Out with those boats, and let us haste away,"
Cried one, "ere yet yon sea the bark devours."
The man thus clamouring was, I scarce need say,
No officer of ours.

We knew our duty better than to care
For such loose babblers, and made no reply,
Till our good colonel gave the word, and there
Formed us in line to die.

There rose no murmur from the ranks, no thought,
By shameful strength, unhonoured life to seek;
Our post to quit we were not trained, nor taught
To trample down the weak.

So we made women with their children go,
  The oars ply back again, and yet again;
Whilst, inch by inch, the drowning ship sank low,
    Still, under steadfast men.

What follows, why recall?—The brave who died,
  Died without flinching in the bloody surf;
They sleep as well beneath that purple tide
    As others under turf.

They sleep as well! and, roused from their wild grave,
  Wearing their wounds like stars, shall rise again,
Joint-heirs with Christ, because they bled to save
    His weak ones, not in vain.

If that day's work no clasp or medal mark;
  If each proud heart no cross of bronze may press,
Nor cannon thunder loud from Tower and Park,
    This feel we none the less:—

That those whom God's high grace there saved from ill,
Those also, left His martyrs in the bay,
Though not by siege, though not in battle, still
    Full well had earned their pay.

Sir Francis Hastings Doyle

PATRIOTISM

Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
"This is my own, my native land!"
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd
From wandering on a foreign strand?

If such there breathe, go, mark him well ;
For him no Minstrel raptures swell ;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim ;
Despite those titles, power and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd and unsung.

Sir Walter Scott

HOW SLEEP THE BRAVE

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest !
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Then Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung ;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung ;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay ;
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there !

William Collins

YOU ASK ME, WHY, THO' ILL AT EASE

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
  Within this region I subsist,
  Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
  That sober-suited Freedom chose,
  The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,
  A land of just and old renown,
  Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent ;

Where faction seldom gathers head,
  But by degrees to fullness wrought,
  The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
  Opinion, and induce a time
  When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land to land
  The name of Britain trebly great—
  Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
  Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,
  And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND

What have I done for you,
  England, my England ?
What is there I would not do,
  England, my own ?
With your glorious eyes austere,
As the Lord were walking near,
Whispering terrible things and dear
  As the Song on your bugles blown,
  England—
  Round the world on your bugles blown !

Where shall the watchful Sun,
  England, my England,

Match the master-work you've done,
  England, my own ?
When shall he rejoice agen
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,
  To the Song on your bugles blown,
  England—
  Down the years on your bugles blown ?

Ever the faith endures,
  England, my England :—
" Take and break us : we are yours,
  England, my own !
Life is good, and joy runs high
Between English earth and sky :
Death is death ; but we shall die
  To the Song on your bugles blown,
  England—
  To the stars in your bugles blown ! "

They call you proud and hard,
  England, my England :
You with worlds to watch and ward,
  England, my own !
You whose mailed hand keeps the keys
Of such teeming destinies,
You could know nor dread nor ease
  Were the Song on your bugles blown,
  England,
  Round the Pit on your bugles blown !

Mother of Ships whose might,
  England, my England,
Is the fierce old Sea's delight,
  England, my own,
Chosen daughter of the Lord,
Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient sword,
There's the menace of the Word
  In the Song on your bugles blown,
  England—
  Out of heaven on your bugles blown !

William Ernest Henley

THE SCHOOL AT WAR

All night before the brink of death
  In fitful sleep the army lay,
For through the dream that stilled their breath
  Too gauntly glared the coming day.

But we, within whose blood there leaps
  The fulness of a life as wide
As Avon's water where he sweeps
  Seaward at last with Severn's tide,

We heard beyond the desert night
  The murmur of the fields we knew,
And our swift souls with one delight
  Like homing swallows Northward flew.

We played again the immortal games,
  And grappled with the fierce old friends,
And cheered the dead undying names,
  And sang the song that never ends;

Till, when the hard, familiar bell
  Told that the summer night was late,
Where long ago we said farewell,
  We said farewell by the old gate.

"O Captains unforgot," they cried,
  "Come you again or come no more,
Across the world you keep the pride,
  Across the world we mark the score."

Sir Henry Newbolt

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the North-
west died away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into
Cadiz Bay;
Bluish' mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar
lay;
In the dimmest North-east distance dawned
Gibraltar grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me: how can
I help England?"—say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise
and pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

Robert Browning

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

I

Oh, to be in England,
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

II

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice
over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!

And though the fields look rough with hoary dew
All will be gay, when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower,
  Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

Robert Browning

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
  As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
  O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
  The sods with our bayonets turning,
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
  And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
  Nor in sheet nor in shroud we bound him;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
  With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
  And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face of the dead,
  And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollow'd his narrow bed,
  And smooth'd down his narrow pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
  And we far away on the billow!

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
  And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,—
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
  In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done
  When the clock struck the hour for retiring;

And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down
From the field of his fame fresh and gory ;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone—
But we left him alone with his glory !

Charles Wolfe

THE OCEAN

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll !
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain ;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore ; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee ; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray,
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth :—there let him lay.

. . . . . .

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests : in all time,
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving ;—boundless, endless, and sublime—

The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible ; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone
Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

George Gordon, Lord Byron

THE RAINBOW

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky :
So was it when my life began ;
So is it now I am a man ;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die !
The Child is father of the Man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

William Wordsworth

TO AILSA ROCK

Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid !
Give answer by thy voice, the sea-fowls' screams !
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams ?
When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid ?
How long is't since the mighty Power bid
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams ?
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,
Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid.
Thou answer'st not ; for thou art dead asleep ;
Thy life is but two dead eternities—
The last in air, the former in the deep ;
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies—
Drowned wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
Another cannot wake thy giant size !

John Keats

A WINTRY PICTURE

Now where the bare sky spans the landscape bare,
Up long brown fallows creeps the slow brown team,
Scattering the seed-corn that must sleep and dream
Till by Spring's carillon awakened there.
Ruffling the tangles of his thicket hair,
The stripling yokel steadies now the beam,
Now strides erect with cheeks that glow and gleam,
And whistles shrewdly to the spacious air.
Lured onward to the distance dim and blear,
The road crawls weary of the travelled miles :
The kine stand cowering in unmoving files ;
The shrewmouse rustles through the bracken sere ;
And, in the sculptured woodland's leafless aisles,
The robin chants the vespers of the year.

Alfred Austin

AUTUMN

The warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying ;
And the year
On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
Is lying.
Come, months, come away,
From November to May,
In your saddest array ;
Follow the bier
Of the dead cold year,
And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

The chill rain is falling, the nipped worm is crawling,
The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling
For the year ;
The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone
To his dwelling.

Come, months, come away;
Put on white, black, and grey;
Let your light sisters play—
Ye, follow the bier
Of the dead cold year,
And make her grave green with tear on tear.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

EGYPT'S MIGHT IS TUMBLED DOWN

Egypt's might is tumbled down
  Down a-down the deeps of thought;
Greece is fallen and Troy town,
Glorious Rome hath lost her crown,
  Venice' pride is nought.

But the dreams their children dreamed
  Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,
Shadowy as the shadows seemed,
Airy nothing, as they deemed,
  These remain.

Mary Coleridge

THE BUGLE SONG

The splendour falls on castle walls
  And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
  And the wild cataract leaps in glory,
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
  And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
  The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
  They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
  And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

A VISIT FROM THE SEA

Far from the loud sea beaches
  Where he goes fishing and crying,
Here in the inland garden
  Why is the sea-gull flying?

Here are no fish to dive for;
  Here is the corn and lea;
Here are the green trees rustling,
  Hie away home to sea!

Fresh is the river water
  And quiet among the rushes;
This is no home for the sea-gull,
  But for the rooks and thrushes.

Pity the bird that has wandered!
  Pity the sailor ashore!
Hurry him home to the ocean,
  Let him come here no more!

High on the sea-cliff ledges
  The white gulls are trooping and crying;
Here among rooks and roses
  Why is the seagull flying?

Robert Louis Stevenson

THE OLD SHIPS

I HAVE seen old ships sail like swans asleep
Beyond the village which men still call Tyre,
With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep
For Famagusta and the hidden sun
That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire ;
And all those ships were certainly so old—
Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun
Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,
The pirate Genoese
Hell-raked them till they rolled
Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold.
But now through friendly seas they softly run,
Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,
Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen
Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn
And image tumbled on a rose-swept bay
A drowsy ship of some yet older day ;
And, wonder's breath indrawn,
Thought I—who knows ? who knows ?—but in that
same
(Fished up beyond Aeaea, latched up new
—Stern painted brighter blue—)
That talkative, bald-headed seaman came
(Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)
From Troy's doom-crimson shore,
And with great lies about his wooden horse
Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship—who knows, who knows ?
—And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain
To see the mast burst open with a rose,
And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

James Elroy Flecker

MIDNIGHT

MIDNIGHT was come, when every vital thing
With sweet sound sleep their weary limbs did rest,
The beasts were still, the little birds that sing
Now sweetly slept, beside their mother's breast,
The old and all were shrouded in their nest :
The waters calm, the cruel seas did cease,
The woods, and fields, and all things held their peace.

The golden stars were whirled amid their race,
And on the earth did laugh with twinkling light,
When each thing, nestled in his resting-place,
Forgat day's pain with pleasure of the night :
The hare had not the greedy hounds in sight,
The fearful deer of death stood not in doubt,
The partridge dreamed not of the falcon's foot.

The ugly bear now minded not the stake,
Nor how cruel mastives do him tear ;
The stag lay still unroused from the brake ;
The foamy boar feared not the hunter's spear :
All things were still, in desert, bush, and brere :[1]
With quiet heart, now from their travails ceased,
Soundly they slept in midst of all their rest.

Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst

UNCONQUERED

OUT of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.

[1] Briar; wildwood.

Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbow'd.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate :
I am the captain of my soul.

William Ernest Henley

THE TWO RIVERS

O River of Yesterday, with current swift
Through chasms descending, and soon lost to sight,
I do not care to follow in thy flight
The faded leaves, that on thy bosom drift !

O River of To-morrow, I uplift
Mine eyes, and thee I follow, as the night
Wanes into morning, and the dawning light
Broadens, and all the shadows fade and shift !

I follow, follow, where thy waters run
Through unfrequented, unfamiliar fields,
Fragrant with flowers and musical with song ;
Still follow, follow ; sure to meet the sun,
And confident, that what the future yields
Will be the right, unless myself be wrong.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

ODE

We are the music-makers,
  And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
  And sitting by desolate streams ;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
  On whom the pale moon gleams :
Yet we are the movers and shakers
  Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
  And out of a fabulous story
  We fashion an empire's glory :
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
  Shall go forth and conquer a crown ;
And three with a new song's measure
  Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying
  In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
  And Babel itself in our mirth ;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
  To the old of the new world's worth ;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
  Or one that is coming to birth.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy

UP-HILL

Does the road wind up-hill all the way ?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day ?
  From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place ?
  A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face ?
  You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night ?
  Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock or call when just in sight ?
  They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak ?
  Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek ?
  Yea, beds for all who come.

Christina Rossetti

THE FLOWERS

When Love arose in heart and deed
  To wake the world to greater joy,
" What can she give me now ? " said Greed,
  Who thought to win some costly toy.

He rose, he ran, he stooped, he clutched ;
  And soon the Flowers, that Love let fall,
In Greed's hot grasp were fray'd and smutched,
  And Greed said, " Flowers ! Can this be all ? "

He flung them down and went his way,
  He cared no jot for thyme or rose ;
But boys and girls came out to play,
  And some took these and some took those,

Red, blue, and white, and green and gold ;
  And at their touch the dew returned,
And all the bloom a thousand fold—
  So red, so ripe, the roses burned !

William Brighty Rands

SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NAUGHT AVAILETH

Say not the struggle naught availeth,
  The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
  And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars ;
  It may be, in yon smoke conceal'd,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
  And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
  Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
  Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
  When daylight comes, comes in the light ;
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly !
  But westward, look, the land is bright !

Arthur Hugh Clough

SILENCE

There is a silence where hath been no sound,
  There is a silence where no sound may be,
  In the cold grave—under the deep, deep sea,
Or in wide desert where no life is found,
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;
  No voice is hush'd—no life treads silently,
  But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground :
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
  Of antique palaces where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox or wild hyaena calls,
  And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan—
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

Thomas Hood

DEATH THE LEVELLER

The glories of our blood and state
  Are shadows, not substantial things ;
There is no armour against Fate ;
  Death lays his icy hand on kings :
    Sceptre and Crown
    Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
  And plant fresh laurels where they kill :
But their strong nerves at last must yield ;
  They tame but one another still :
    Early or late
    They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow ;
  Then boast no more your mighty deeds ;
Upon Death's purple altar now
  See where the victor-victim bleeds.
    Your heads must come
    To the cold tomb :
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.

James Shirley

INTEGER VITAE

The man of life upright,
  Whose guiltless heart is free
From all dishonest deeds,
  Or thought of vanity ;

The man whose silent days
  In harmless joys are spent,
Whom hopes cannot delude,
  Nor sorrow discontent ;

That man needs neither towers
  Nor armour for defence,
Nor secret vaults to fly
  From thunder's violence :

He only can behold
  With unaffrighted eyes
The horrors of the deep
  And terrors of the skies.

Thus, scorning all the cares
  That fate or fortune brings,
He makes the heaven his book,
  His wisdom heavenly things ;

Good thoughts his only friends,
  His wealth a well-spent age,
The earth his sober inn
  And quiet pilgrimage.

Thomas Campion

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent, which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He, returning, chide,—
" Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ? "
I fondly ask :—But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, " God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts : who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best : His state
Is kingly ; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest :—
They also serve who only stand and wait."

John Milton

THE PERFECT LIFE

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make Man better be ;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere :
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night—
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see ;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

Ben Jonson

CANADIAN BOAT SONG

LISTEN to me, as when ye heard our father
  Sing long ago the song of other shores—
Listen to me, and then in chorus gather
  All your deep voices as ye pull your oars :
Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

From the lone shieling of the misty island
  Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas—
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
  And we in dreams behold the Hebrides :
Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

We ne'er shall tread the fancy-haunted valley,
  Where 'tween the dark hills creeps the small clear stream,
In arms around the patriarch banner rally,
  Nor see the moon on royal tombstones gleam :
Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

When the bold kindred, in the time long-vanish'd,
  Conquer'd the soil and fortified the keep,
No seer foretold the children would be banish'd,
  That a degenerate lord might boast his sheep :
Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

Come foreign rage—let Discord burst in slaughter !
  O then for clansmen true, and stern claymore—
The hearts that would have given their blood like water
  Beat heavily beyond the Atlantic roar :
Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

Anon.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

EARTH has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will;
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still.

William Wordsworth

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL

CROMWELL, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and His work pursued;
While Darwen stream with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureat wreath. Yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War; new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains:
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.

John Milton

THE ORDER OF VALOUR

(1856)

THUS saith the Queen! "For him who gave
  His blood as water in the fight,—
So he from Russian wrong might save
  My crown, my people and my right,—
Let there be made a cross of bronze
  And grave thereon my queenly crest,
Write VALOUR on its haughty scroll
  And hang it on his breast."

Thus saith the Land! "He who shall bear
  Victoria's cross upon his breast,
In token that he did not fear
  To die—had need been—for her rest;
For the dear sake of her who gives,
  And the high deeds of him who wears,
Shall, high or low, all honour have
  From all, through all his years."

Sir Edwin Arnold

YOUNG AND OLD

WHEN all the world is young, lad,
  And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
  And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
  And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
  And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
  And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
  And all the wheels run down;
Creep home, and take your place there,
  The spent and maimed among;
God grant you find one face there
  You loved when all was young.

Charles Kingsley

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT

Is there for honest poverty
  That hangs his head, and a' that ?
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
  We dare be poor for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
  Our toils obscure, and a' that ;
The rank is but the guinea-stamp,
  The man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
  Wear hodden grey, and a' that,
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine ;
  A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
  Their tinsel show, and a' that,
The honest man, though ne'er sae poor,
  Is king o' men for a' that.

A king can mak' a belted knight,
  A marquis, duke, and a' that ;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
  Gude faith he mauna fa' that !
For a' that, and a' that,
  Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
  Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
  As come it will, for a' that,
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
  May bear the gree, and a' that,
For a' that, and a' that,
  It's comin' yet for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
  Shall brothers be for a' that.

Robert Burns

MINE AND THINE

Two words about the world we see,
And nought but Mine and Thine they be.
Ah ! might we drive them forth and wide
With us should rest and peace abide ;
All free, nought owned of goods and gear,
By men and women though it were.
Common to all all wheat and wine
Over the seas and up the Rhine.
No manslayer then the wide world o'er
When Mine and Thine are known no more.
Yea, God, well counselled for our health,
Gave all this fleeting earthly wealth
A common heritage to all,
That men might feed them therewithal,
And clothe their limbs and shoe their feet
And live a simple life and sweet.
But now so rageth greediness
That each desireth nothing less
Than all the world and all his own ;
And all for him and him alone.

William Morris

TO NATURE

It may indeed be phantasy when I
Essay to draw from all created things
Deep, heartfelt, inward joy that closely clings ;
And trace in leaves and flowers that round me lie
Lessons of love and earnest piety.
So let it be ; and if the wide world rings
In mock of this belief, to me it brings
Nor fear, nor grief, nor vain perplexity.
  So will I build my altar in the fields,
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be,
And the sweet fragrance that the wild flower yields
Shall be the incense I will yield to Thee,
Thee only God ! and Thou shalt not despise
Even me, the priest of this poor sacrifice.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

OZYMANDIAS

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said : Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed ;
And on the pedestal these words appear :
" My name is Ozymandias, King of kings :
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair ! "
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

BATTLE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

MINE eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord :
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored ;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword ;
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps ;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps ;
I can read his righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps ;
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel :
" As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal ;

Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His Judgment-seat;
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me;
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

Julia Ward Howe

BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows—through doors—burst like a ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,
Into the school where the scholar is studying;
Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he have now with his bride,
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field or gathering his grain,
So fierce you whirr and pound, you drums—so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of wheels in the streets;

Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses ? no sleepers must sleep in those beds,
No bargainers' bargains by day—no brokers or speculators—would they continue ?
Would the talkers be talking ? would the singer attempt to sing ?
Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge ?
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles, wilder blow.

Beat ! beat ! drums !—blow ! bugles ! blow !
Make no parley—stop for no expostulation,
Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer,
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties,
Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the hearses,
So strong you thump, O terrible drums—so loud you bugles blow.

Walt Whitman

THE CHILDREN'S SONG

LAND of our Birth, we pledge to thee
Our love and toil in the years to be ;
When we are grown and take our place,
As men and women with our race.

Father in Heaven who lovest all,
Oh help Thy children when they call ;
That they may build from age to age
An undefilèd heritage.

Teach us to bear the yoke in youth,
With steadfastness and careful truth ;
That, in our time, Thy Grace may give
The Truth whereby the Nations live.

Teach us to rule ourselves alway,
Controlled and cleanly night and day;
That we may bring, if need arise,
No maimed or worthless sacrifice.

Teach us to look, in all our ends,
On Thee for judge, and not our friends;
That we, with Thee, may walk uncowed
By fear or favour of the crowd.

Teach us the Strength that cannot seek,
By deed or thought to hurt the weak;
That, under Thee, we may possess
Man's strength to comfort man's distress.

Teach us Delight in simple things,
And Mirth that has no bitter springs:
Forgiveness free of evil done,
And Love to all men 'neath the sun!

Land of our Birth, our faith, our pride,
For whose dear sake our fathers died;
O Motherland, we pledge to thee,
Head, heart and hand through the years
to be!

Rudyard Kipling

SWEET CONTENT

Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers ?
    O sweet content !
Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed ?
    O punishment !
Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed
To add to golden numbers golden numbers ?
O sweet content ! O sweet, O sweet content !
    Work apace, apace, apace, apace ;
    Honest labour bears a lovely face ;
    Then hey nonny, hey nonny, nonny !

Canst drink the waters of the crispèd spring ?
    O sweet content !
Swimm'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own
    tears ?
    O punishment !
Then he that patiently want's burden bears,
No burden bears, but is a king, a king !
O sweet content, O sweet, O sweet content !
    Work apace, apace, apace, apace ;
    Honest labour bears a lovely face ;
    Then hey nonny, hey nonny, nonny !

Thomas Dekker

THE END OF DAYS

Even such is Time, that takes in trust
  Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust ;
  Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wander'd all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days ;
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust !

Sir Walter Raleigh

PART III.

THE COTTAGER TO HER INFANT

THE days are cold, the nights are long,
The North wind sings a doleful song;
Then hush again upon my breast;
All merry things are now at rest,
  Save thee, my pretty love!

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,
The crickets long have ceased their mirth;
There's nothing stirring in the house
Save one wee, hungry, nibbling mouse;
  Then why so busy thou?
Nay! start not at the sparkling light;
'Tis but the moon that shines so bright
  On the window-pane
  Bedropped with rain:
Then, little darling! sleep again,
  And wake when it is day.

Dorothy Wordsworth

CRADLE SONG

SLEEP, sleep, beauty bright,
Dreaming o'er the joys of night;
Sleep, sleep, in thy sleep
Little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Soft desires I can trace,

Secret joys and secret smiles,
Little pretty infant wiles.

As thy softest limbs I feel,
Smiles as of the morning steal
O'er thy cheek, and o'er thy breast,
Where thy little heart doth rest.

O the cunning wiles that creep
In thy little heart asleep!
When thy little heart doth wake,
Then the dreadful night shall break.

William Blake

THE LAND OF DREAMS

AWAKE, awake, my little Boy!
Thou wast thy Mother's only joy:
Why dost thou weep in thy gentle sleep?
Awake! thy Father does thee keep.

"O, what land is the Land of Dreams?
What are its mountains, and what are its streams?
O Father! I saw my Mother there,
Among the lilies by waters fair.

"Among the lambs clothèd in white,
She walked with her Thomas in sweet delight.
I wept for joy, like a dove I mourn;
O! when shall I again return?"

Dear Child, I also by pleasant streams
Have wandered all night in the Land of Dreams,
But tho' calm and warm the waters wide,
I could not get to the other side.

"Father, O Father! what do we here,
In this Land of unbelief and fear?
The Land of Dreams is better far
Above the light of the Morning Star."

William Blake

AN AWAKENING SONG

Sister, awake ! close not your eyes !
  The day her light discloses,
And the bright morning doth arise
  Out of her bed of roses.

See, the clear sun, the world's bright eye,
  In at our window peeping :
Lo ! how he blusheth to espy
  Us idle wenches sleeping.

Therefore, awake ! make haste, I say,
  And let us, without staying,
All in our gowns of green so gay
  Into the park a-maying.

Anon

THE MAKER OF CRADLES

He makes little cradles of fine lacquered wood,
He paints them with dragons and stars and birds,
They are carven and coloured and lined with silk,
And he weaves a charm for them to woven words.

  (" Where shall I rest your little tired head ?
  Son of my heart, lie still " : she said.)

He makes little cradles of beaten bronze ;
As light as a leaf is the fretted screen ;
The pillow is scented with jasmine flowers,
The silken blanket is fit for a queen.

  (" Where shall I rest your little tired head ?
  Son of my heart, lie still " : she said.)

He makes little cradles of silver and gold,
Turquoise and ivory gem the hood.
They swing from a peacock's outspread tail,
And the rockers are carved of sandal-wood.

  (" Where shall I rest your little tired head ?
  Son of my heart, lie still " : she said.)

The gipsy mother goes humbly by,
The babe in her arms lies warm and still,
Oh, Maker of Cradles, you cannot weave
A lovelier cradle, for all your skill.

(" Where shall I rest your little tired head ?
Son of my heart, lie still " : she said.)

Thora Stowell

THE WILD FLOWER GARDEN

All about the countryside
God's garden grows,—
Ragged robin, buttercup
And sweet dog-rose,
Daisy, pansy, meadow-sweet,
Orchis and violet blue.
All about the countryside
They blow for me and you.

There's primrose and daffodil,
Bluebell and thyme,
Silver catkins, hawthorn,
Blossom of the lime,
Heather on the moorland,
Blue holly by the sea,
All in God's garden,
Grow for you and me.—

Thora Stowell

ENGLAND

O lovely day—and lovelier night—
In England now ; when apple trees
Are garlanded with pink and white
And gay with singing chaffinches ;

When tits like fairy jewels gem
The coppice where the blackbirds call,
And bluebells weave a diadem
For England—loveliest land of all.

Lilian Holmes

A JUNE BIRTHDAY

THERE'S the lark, my dear, and the blackbird, and
all the beautiful throng,
Madder and merrier now than ever they've been
the whole year yet,
Fiddle and fife and reedy flute in their shrill,
ecstatic song;
For it's June, my dear, and your birthday, and
Summer cannot forget.

The sun has been over the tree-tops this long, long
hour and more,
And the wind's like a morris-dancer, stepping out
to the blackbird's flute,
And little, whispering leaf-shadows creep in to
dance on your floor—
Oh, lean from your window and listen to us, for
never a singer is mute!

Thora Stowell

THE ROVER'S ADIEU

A WEARY lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine!
To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
And press the rue for wine.
A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
A feather of the blue,
A doublet of the Lincoln green—
No more of me ye knew,
My Love!
No more of me ye knew.

"This morn is merry June, I trow,
The rose is budding fain;
But she shall bloom in winter snow
Ere we two meet again."
—He turn'd his charger as he spake
Upon the river shore,

He gave the bridle-reins a shake,
Said, "Adieu for evermore,
My Love!
And adieu for evermore."

Sir Walter Scott

THE FISHER'S WIDOW

THE boats go out and the boats come in
Under the wintry sky;
And the rain and foam are white in the wind,
And the white gulls cry.

She sees the sea, when the wind is wild,
Swept by the windy rain;
And her heart's a-weary of sea and land
As the long days wane.

She sees the torn sails fly in the foam,
Broad on the sky-line grey;
And the boats go out and the boats come in,
But there's one away.

Arthur Symons

LAWN AS WHITE AS DRIVEN SNOW

LAWN as white as driven snow;
Cypress black as e'er was crow;
Gloves as sweet as damask roses;
Masks for faces and for noses;
Bugle bracelet, necklace amber,
Perfume for a lady's chamber;
Golden quoifs and stomachers
For my lads to give their dears;
Pins and poking-sticks of steel,
What maids lack from head to heel:
Come buy of me, come; come buy, come buy;
Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry:
Come buy.

William Shakespeare

HARK, HARK, THE LARK

HARK, hark, the Lark at Heaven's gate sings,
  And Phoebus[1] 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those Springs
  On chaliced flowers that lies :
And winking Mary-buds begin
  To ope their golden eyes :
With every thing that pretty bin,
  My Lady sweet, arise :
    Arise, arise !

William Shakespeare

THE FAIRY'S SONG

OVER hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moonés sphere ;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be ;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours.

William Shakespeare

SONG

WHO is Silvia ? what is she,
  That all our swains commend her ?
Holy, fair, and wise is she ;
  The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admiréd be.

Is she kind as she is fair ?
  For beauty lives with kindness :
Love[2] doth to her eyes repair,

[1] The Sun. In ancient fable the god Phoebus drove the Sun round the sky in his chariot.

[2] Referring to the fable that Cupid, the god of love, was blind.

To help him of his blindness;
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing,
That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling;
To her let us garlands bring.

William Shakespeare

COME UNTO THESE YELLOW SANDS

(*Ariel singing*)

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands:
Curtsied when you have, and kiss'd
The wild waves whist[1]:
Foot it featly here, and there,
And, sweet sprights, the burthen bear.
Hark, hark, bow wow:
The watch-dogs bark, bow wow.
Hark, hark, I hear
The strain of strutting chanticlere
Cry Cockadidle-dow.

William Shakespeare

RUTH

She stood breast-high amid the corn,
Clasp'd by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripen'd;—such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

[1] To silence.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veil'd a light
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim ;
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks :—

Sure, I said, Heav'n did not mean,
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean.
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.

Thomas Hood

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

She walks in beauty, like the night
  Of cloudless climes and starry skies ;
And all that's best of dark and bright
  Meet in her aspect and her eyes :
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
  Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
  Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
  Or softly lightens o'er her face ;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
  How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
  So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
  But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
  A heart whose love is innocent !

Lord Byron

REEDS OF INNOCENCE

PIPING down the valleys wild,
  Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
  And he laughing said to me :

" Pipe a song about a Lamb ! "
  So I piped with merry cheer.
" Piper, pipe that song again ; "
  So I piped : he wept to hear.

" Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe ;
  Sing thy songs of happy cheer ; "
So I sang the same again,
  While he wept with joy to hear.

" Piper, sit thee down and write
  In a book that all may read."
So he vanish'd from my sight,
  And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
  And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
  Every child may joy to hear.

William Blake

ON THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF PEMBROKE

UNDERNEATH this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse :
Sidney's[1] sister, Pembroke's mother :
Death, ere thou hast slain another
Fair and learn'd and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

William Browne

[1] Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586).

LETTY'S GLOBE

When Letty had scarce pass'd her third glad year,
  And her young artless words began to flow,
One day we gave the child a colour'd sphere
  Of the wide earth, that she might mark and know,
By tint and outline, all its sea and land.
  She patted all the world ; old empires peep'd
Between her baby fingers ; her soft hand
  Was welcome at all frontiers. How she leap'd
  And laugh'd and prattled in her world-wide bliss !
But when we turn'd her sweet unlearnéd eye
On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry—
" Oh ! yes, I see it, Letty's home is there ! "
  And while she hid all England with a kiss,
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.

Charles Tennyson Turner

SEVEN TIMES ONE

There's no dew left on the daisies and clover,
  There's no rain left in heaven :
I've said my " seven times " over and over,
  Seven times one are seven. .

I am old, so old, I can write a letter ;
  My birthday lessons are done ;
The lambs play always, they know no better,
  They are only one times one.

O Moon ! in the night I have seen you sailing
  And shining so round and low ;
You were bright ! ah bright ! but your light is failing—
  You are nothing now but a bow.

You Moon, have you done something wrong in heaven
  That God has hidden your face ?
I hope if you have you will soon be forgiven,
  And shine again in your place.

O velvet Bee, you're a dusty fellow,
  You've powdered your legs with gold!
O brave Marsh Marybuds, rich and yellow,
  Give me your money to hold!

O Columbine, open your folded wrapper,
  Where two twin turtle-doves dwell!
O Cuckoo-pint, toll me the purple clapper
  That hangs in your clear green bell!

And show me your nest with the young ones in it;
  I will not steal them away;
I am old! you may trust me, linnet, linnet,—
  I am seven times one to-day.

Jean Ingelow

BONNY BARBARA ALLAN

It was in and about the Martinmas time,
  When the green leaves were a-falling,
That Sir John Graeme, o' the West Country,
  Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

He sent his man down through the town,
  To the place where she was dwelling:
"O haste and come to my master dear,
  Gin[1] ye be Barbara Allan."

O hooly, hooly,[2] rose she up,
  To the place where he was lying,
And when she drew the curtain by;—
  "Young man, I think you're dying."

"O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,
  And 't is a' for Barbara Allan."—
"O the better for me ye's never be,
  Tho' your heart's blood were spilling.

"O dinna ye mind,[3] young man," said she,
  "When ye was in the tavern a-drinking,

[1] if. [2] slowly, softly. [3] remember.

How ye made the healths gae round and round,
  And slighted Barbara Allan ? "

He turned his face unto the wall,
  And death was with him dealing :
" Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
  And be kind to Barbara Allan."

She had not gane a mile but twa,
  When she heard the dead-bell knelling,
And every jow[1] that the dead-bell gied,
  It cried, *Woe to Barbara Allan !*

" O mother, mother, make my bed !
  O make it saft and narrow !
Since my love died for me to-day,
  I'll die for him to-morrow."

BALLAD OF EARL HALDAN'S DAUGHTER

It was Earl Haldan's daughter,
  She looked across the sea ;
She looked across the water,
  And long and loud laughed she :
" The locks of six princesses
  Must be my marriage fee,
So hey, bonny boat, and ho, bonny boat !
  Who comes a-wooing me ? "

It was Earl Haldan's daughter,
  She walked along the sand ;
When she was aware of a knight so fair
  Came sailing to the land.
His sails were all of velvet,
  His mast of beaten gold,
And " Hey, bonny boat, and ho, bonny boat !
  Who saileth here so bold ? "

" The locks of five princesses
  I won beyond the sea ;

[1] stroke.

I clipt their golden tresses,
  To fringe a cloak for thee.
One handful yet is wanting,
  But one of all the tale ;
So hey, bonny boat, and ho, bonny boat !
  Furl up thy velvet sail ! "

He leapt into the water,
  That rover young and bold,
He gript Earl Haldan's daughter,
  He clipt her locks of gold :
" Go weep, go weep, proud maiden,
  The tale is full to-day.
Now hey, bonny boat, and ho, bonny boat !
  Sail westward ho away ! "

Charles Kingsley

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

" Why weep ye by the tide, ladie ?
  Why weep ye by the tide ?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
  And ye shall be his bride :
And ye shall be his bride, ladie,
  Sae comely to be seen "—
But aye she loot[1] the tears down fa'
  For Jock of Hazeldean.

" Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
  And dry that cheek so pale ;
Young Frank is chief of Errington
  And lord of Langley-dale ;
His step is first in peaceful ha',[2]
  His sword in battle keen "—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
  For Jock of Hazeldean.

" A chain of gold ye shall not lack,
  Nor braid to bind your hair,

[1] let. [2] hall.

Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
  Nor palfrey fresh and fair ;
And you, the foremost o' them a',
  Shall ride our forest-queen "—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
  For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk [1] was deck'd at morning-tide,
  The tapers glimmer'd fair ;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
  And dame and knight are there :
They sought her baith [2] by bower and ha' ;
  The ladie was not seen !
She's o'er the Border, and awa'
  Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

Sir Walter Scott

SIR PATRICK SPENS

I. *The Sailing*

THE king sits in Dunfermline town
  Drinking the bluid-red wine ;
" O whare will I get a skeely [3] skipper
  To sail this new ship o' mine ? "

O up and spake an eldern knight,
  Sat at the king's right knee ;
" Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
  That ever sail'd the sea."

Our king has written a braid [4] letter,
  And seal'd it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
  Was walking on the strand.

" To Noroway, to Noroway,
  To Noroway o'er the faem [5] ;
The king's daughter o' Noroway,
  'Tis thou maun [6] bring her hame."

[1] church. [2] both. [3] skilful.
[4] broad. [5] foam. [6] must

The first word that Sir Patrick read
So loud, loud laugh'd he ;
The neist[1] word that Sir Patrick read
The tear blinded his e'e.[2]

"O wha is this has done this deed
And tauld the king o' me.
To send us out, at this time o' year,
To sail upon the sea ?

"Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet,
Our ship must sail the faem ;
The king's daughter o' Noroway,
'Tis we must fetch her hame."

They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn
Wi' a' the speed they may ;
They hae landed in Noroway
Upon a Wodensday.

II. *The Return.*

"Mak ready, mak ready, my merry men a' !
Our gude ship sails the morn."
"Now ever alack, my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm.

"I saw the new moon late yestreen
Wi' the auld moon in her arm ;
And if we gang to sea, master,
I fear we'll come to harm."

They hadna sail'd a league, a league,
A league, but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly[3] grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the topmast lap,
It was sic a deadly storm :
The waves cam owre the broken ship
Till a' her sides were torn.

[1] next. [2] eye. [3] raging.

"Go fetch a web o' the silken claith,
  Another o' the twine,
And wap them into our ship's side,
  And let na the sea come in."

They fetch'd a web o' the silken claith,
  Another o' the twine,
And they wrapp'd them round that gude ship's side,
  But still the sea came in.

O laith, laith were our gude Scots lords
  To wet their cork-heel'd shoon;
But lang or a' the play was play'd
  They wat their hats aboon.

And mony was the feather bed
  That flatter'd on the faem;
And mony was the gude lord's son
  That never mair cam hame.

O lang, lang may the ladies sit,
  Wi' their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
  Come sailing to the strand.

And lang, lang may the maidens sit
  Wi' their gowd kames[1] in their hair
A-waiting for their ain dear loves!
  For them they'll see nae mair.

O forty miles off Aberdeen
  'Tis fifty fathom deep;
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens
  Wi' the Scots lords at his feet!

[1] gold combs.

KATE BARLASS

I, CATHERINE, am a Douglas born,
A name to all Scots dear ;
And Kate Barlass they've called me now
Through many a waning year.

This old arm's withered now. 'Twas once
Most deft 'mong maidens all,
To rein the steed, to wing the shaft,
To smite the palm-play ball.

In hall adown the close-linked dance
It has shone most white and fair ;
It has been the rest for a true lord's head,
And many a sweet babe's nursing bed,
And the bar to a king's chambere.

Ay, lasses, draw round Kate Barlass,
And hark with bated breath
How good King James, King Robert's son,
Was foully done to death.

'Twas a wind-wild eve in February
And 'gainst the casement pane
The branches smote like summoning hands,
And muttered the driving rain.

And now there came a torchlight glare,
And a clang of arms there came :
And not a soul in that space but thought
Of the foe, Sir Robert Graeme.

Yea, from the land of the wild Scots,
O'er mountain, vale and glen,
He had brought with him in murderous league
Three hundred armed men.

The King knew all in an instant's flash,
And like a king did he stand ;
But there was no armour in all the room,
Nor weapon lay to his hand.

And all we women flew to the door,
And thought to have made it fast;
But the bolts were gone, and the bars were gone,
And the locks were riven and brast.

And he caught the pale, pale Queen in his arms
As the iron footsteps fell;
Then loosed her, standing alone, and said,
"Our bliss was our farewell."

And 'twixt his lips he murmured a prayer,
And he crossed his brow and breast;
And proudly in royal hardihood,
Even so with folded arms he stood,
The prize of the bloody quest.

Then on me leapt the Queen like a deer;
"O Catherine, help!" she cried,
And low at his feet we clasped his knees
Together side by side.
"Oh! even a king for his people's sake
From treasonous death must hide!"

"For her sake most!" I cried, and I marked
The pang that my words could wring.
And the iron tongs from the chimney-nook
I snatched and held to the King:
"Wrench up this plank, and the vault beneath
Shall yield safe harbouring."

With brows low bent, from my eager hand
The heavy heft did he take;
And the plank at his feet he wrench'd and tore;
And as he frowned through the open floor,
Again I said, "For her sake!"

Then he cried to the Queen, "God's will be
done!"
For her hands were clasped in prayer.
And down he sprang to the inner crypt;
And straight we closed the plank he had ripp'd,
And toiled to smooth it fair.

Then the Queen cried, "Catherine, keep the door!
And I to this will suffice!"
At her word I rose, all dazed, to my feet,
And my heart was fire and ice.

And louder ever the voices grew,
And the tramp of men in mail;
Until to my brain it seemed to be
As though I tossed in a ship at sea
In the teeth of a crashing gale.

Then back I flew to the rest; and hard
We strove with sinews knit
To force the table against the door;
But we might not compass it.

Then my wild gaze sped far down the hall
To the place of the heartstone sill;
And the Queen bent ever above the floor,
For the plank was rising still.

And now the rush was heard on the stair,
And "God! what help?" was our cry.
And was I frenzied, or was I bold?
I looked at each empty stanchion-hold,
And no bar but my own had I!

Like iron felt my arm, as through
The staple I made it pass:
Alack! it was flesh and bone—no more!
'Twas Catherine Douglas sprang to the door;
But I fell back, Kate Barlass.

With that they all thronged into the hall,
Half dim to my failing ken;
And the space that was but a void before
Was a crowd of wrathful men.

Behind the door I had fallen and lay,
Yet my sense was wildly aware,
And for all the pain of my shattered arm,
I never fainted there.

Even as I fell, my eyes were cast
Where the King leaped down to the pit;
And lo! the plank was smooth in its place,
And the Queen stood far from it.

And under the litters and through the bed,
And within the presses all,
The traitors sought for the King, and pierced
The arras round the wall.

And through the chamber they ramped and stormed
Like lions loose in the lair,
And scarce could trust to their very eyes,
For behold! no King was there.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLNSHIRE, 1571

The old mayor climbed the belfry tower,
  The ringers ran by two, by three;
"Pull, if ye never pulled before;
  Good ringers, pull your best," quoth he.
"Play up, play up, O Boston bells!
Play all your changes, all your swells,
Play up 'The Brides of Enderby'!"

Men say it was a stolen tide—
  The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in mine ears doth still abide
  The message that the bells let fall:
And there was naught of strange, beside
The flights of mews and peewits pied,
  By millions crouched on the old sea-wall.

I sat and spun within the door,
  My thread brake off, I raised mine eyes!
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
  Lay sinking in the barren skies;
And dark against day's golden death,

She moved where Lindis wandereth,—
  My son's fair wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,
  Far away I heard her song,
  "Cusha! Cusha!" all along,
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
      Floweth, floweth,
From the meads where melick groweth.
  Faintly came her milking-song.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
"For the dews will soon be falling;
  Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
      Mellow, mellow:
  Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come up, Whitefoot; come up, Lightfoot;
  Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
      Hollow, hollow;
Come up, Jetty, rise and follow,
  From the clovers lift your head;
Come up, Whitefoot; come up, Lightfoot;
Come up, Jetty, rise and follow,
  Jetty, to the milking-shed."

All fresh the level pasture lay,
  And not a shadow might be seen,
Save where full five good miles away
  The steeple towered from out the green;
And lo! the great bell far and wide
Was heard in all the countryside
That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds, where their sedges are,
  Moved on in sunset's golden breath;
The shepherd lads I heard afar,
  And my son's wife, Elizabeth:
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came down that kindly message free,
"The Brides of Mavis Enderby."

Then some looked up into the sky,
  And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie
  And where the lordly steeple shows.
They said, " And why should this thing be?
What danger lowers by land or sea?
They ring the tune of Enderby!

" For evil news from Mablethorpe,
  Of pirate galleys warping down;
For ships ashore beyond the scorpe,
  They have not spared to wake the town;
But while the west is red to see,
And storms be none, and pirates flee,
Why ring ' The Brides of Enderby ' ? "

I looked without, and lo! my son
  Came riding down with might and main.
He raised a shout as he drew on,
  Till all the welkin rang again,
" Elizabeth! Elizabeth! "
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my son's wife Elizabeth.)

" The old sea-wall " (he cried) " is down,
  The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder town
  Go sailing up the market-place."
He shook as one that looks on death:
" God save you, Mother! " straight he saith;
" Where is my wife Elizabeth? "

" Good son, where Lindis winds away,
  With her two bairns I marked her long;
And ere yon bells began to play,
  Afar I heard her milking-song."
He looked across the grassy sea,
To right, to left, " Ho, Enderby! "
They rang " The Brides of Enderby! "

With that he cried and beat his breast;
  For lo! along the river's bed

A mighty eygre[1] reared his crest,
  And up the Lindis raging sped.
It swept with thunderous noises loud,
Shaped like a curling, snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed,
  Shook all her trembling banks amain ;
Then madly at the eygre's breast
  Flung up her weltering walls again.
Then banks came down with ruin and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.

So far, so fast the eygre drave,
  The heart had hardly time to beat
Before a shallow, seething wave
  Sobbed in the grasses at our feet ;
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roof we sat that night ;
  The noise of bells went sweeping by ;
I marked the lofty beacon light
  Stream from the church-tower, red and high—
A lurid mark and dread to see ;
And awsome bells they were to me,
That in the dark rang " Enderby."

They rang the sailor lads to guide
  From roof to roof who fearless rowed ;
And I—my son was at my side,
  And yet the ruddy beacon glowed :
And yet he moaned beneath his breath ;
" O come in life, or come in death !
O lost ! my love Elizabeth."

And didst thou visit him no more ?
  Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter dear !
The waters laid thee at his door
  Ere yet the early dawn was clear ;

[1] tidal wave.

Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
The lifted sun shone on thy face,
Down drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass;
  That ebb swept out the flocks to sea;
A fatal ebb and flow, alas!
  To many more than mine and me:
But each will mourn his own (she saith),
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my son's wife Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
By the reedy Lindis shore,
"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews be falling;
I shall never hear her song,
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along,
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
        Goeth, floweth;
From the meads where melick groweth,
When the water, winding down,
Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
        Shiver, quiver;
Stand beside the sobbing river,
Sobbing, throbbing in its falling,
To the sandy, lonesome shore;
I shall never hear her calling,
"Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
        Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;

Come up, Whitefoot; come up, Lightfoot;
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
        Hollow, hollow;
Come up, Lightfoot, rise and follow:
        Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
  From your clovers lift the head;
Come up, Jetty, follow, follow,
  Jetty, to the milking-shed."

Jean Ingelow

GOODWIN SANDS

Did you ever read or hear
How the *Aid*—(God bless the *Aid*!
More earnest prayer than that was never prayed)
How the lifeboat, *Aid* of Ramsgate, saved the
London Fusilier?

With a hundred souls on board,
With a hundred and a score,
She was fast on Goodwin Sands.
(May the Lord
Have pity on all hands—
Crew and captain—when a ship's on Goodwin
Sands!)
In the smother and the roar
Of a very hell of waters—hard and fast—
She shook beneath the stroke
Of each billow as it broke,
And the clouds of spray were mingled with the
clouds of swirling smoke
As the blazing barrels bellowed in the blast!

And the women and the little ones were frozen
dumb with fear;
And the strong men waited grimly for the last;
When—as the clocks were striking two in Ramsgate
town—
The little *Aid* came down,
The *Aid*, the plucky *Aid*—
The *Aid* flew down the gale
With the glimmer of the moon upon her sail;

And the people thronged to leeward; stared and
prayed—
Prayed and stared with tearless eye and breathless
lip,
While the little boat drew near.
Ay, and then there rose a shout—
A clamour, half a sob and half a cheer—
As the boatmen flung the lifeboat anchor out,
And the gallant *Aid* sheered in beneath the ship,
Beneath the shadow of the *London Fusilier!*

"We can carry maybe thirty at a trip."
(Hurrah for Ramsgate town!)
"Quick, the women and the children!"

O'er the side
Two sailors, slung in bowlines, hung to help the women down—
Poor women, shrinking back in their dismay
As they saw their ark of refuge, smothered up in spray,
Ranging wildly this and that way in the racing of the tide;
As they watched it rise and drop, with its crew of stalwart men,
When a huge sea swung it upward to the bulwarks of the ship,
And, sweeping by in thunder, sent it plunging down again.
Still they shipped them—nine-and-twenty (God be blessed!)
When a man with glaring eyes
Rushed up frantic to the gangway and with a cry choked in his throat—
Thrust a bundle in a sailor's ready hands.

Honest Jack, *he* understands—
Why, a blanket for a woman in the boat!
"Catch it, Bill!"
And he flung it with a will;
And the boatman turned and caught it, bless him! caught it, tho' it slipped,
And, even as he caught it, heard an infant's cries,
While a woman shrieked and snatched it to her breast—
"My baby!"
So the thirtieth passenger was shipped!

Twice, and thrice, and yet again
Flew the lifeboat down the gale
With the moonlight on her sail—
With the sunrise on her sail—

("God bless the lifeboat *Aid* and all her men!")
Brought her thirty at a trip
Thro' the hell of Goodwin waters as they raged
around the ship,
Saved each soul aboard the *London Fusilier!*

If you live to be a hundred, you will ne'er—
You will ne'er in all your life,
Until you die, my dear,
Be nearer to your death by land or sea!

Was *she* there?
Who?—my wife?
Why, the baby in the blanket—that was she!

William Canton

BARBARA FRIETCHIE

Up from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand,
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

Round about them orchards sweep,
Apple and peach tree fruited deep,

Fair as the garden of the Lord,
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde.

On that pleasant morn of the early fall,
When Lee[1] marched over the mountain wall—

Over the mountains winding down,
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

[1] Robert Lee, the great general of the Southern forces in the American Civil War.

Flapped in the morning wind. The sun
Of noon looked down and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her four-score years and ten;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down;

In her attic window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson[1] riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced; the old flag met his sight.

"Halt!"—the dust-brown ranks stood fast,
"Fire!"—out blazed the rifle blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash;
It rent the banner with seam and gash.

Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf;

She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

"Shoot, if you must, this old grey head,
But spare your country's flag," she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;

The nobler nature within him stirred
To life, at that woman's deed and word.

"Who touches a hair of yon grey head
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said.

[1] Thomas Jackson, another Southern general, nicknamed Stonewall because of his stubborn defensive methods.

All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet;

All day long that free flag tost
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well:

And through the hill-gaps sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good night.

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,
And the Rebel rides on his raid no more.

Honour to her! And let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave,
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!

Peace and order and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law;

And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town.

John Greenleaf Whittier

LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,
  And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
  To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:
  Lovers long betroth'd were they:
They two will wed the morrow morn:
  God's blessing on the day!

"He does not love me for my birth,
  Nor for my lands so broad and fair;
He loves me for my own true worth,
  And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
  Said, "Who was this that went from thee?"
"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,
  "To-morrow he weds with me."

"O God be thank'd!" said Alice the nurse,
  "That all comes round so just and fair:
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
  And you are not the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse,"
  Said Lady Clare, "that ye speak so wild?"
"As God's above," said Alice the nurse,
  "I speak the truth: you are my child.

"The old Earl's daughter died at my breast;
  I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
  And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,
  O mother," she said, "if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
  So many years from his due."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
"But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,
When you are man and wife."

"If I'm a beggar born," she said,
"I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
"But keep the secret all ye can."
She said, "Not so: but I will know
If there be any faith in man."

"Nay now, what faith?" said Alice the nurse,
"The man will cleave unto his right."
"And he shall have it," the lady replied,
"Tho' I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!
Alas! my child, I sinn'd for thee."
"O mother, mother, mother," she said,
"So strange it seems to me."

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare:
She went by dale, and she went by down,
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:
"O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!

Why come you drest like a village maid,
  That are the flower of the earth ? "

" If I come drest like a village maid,
  I am but as my fortunes are :
I am a beggar born," she said,
  " And not the Lady Clare."

" Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
  " For I am yours in word and in deed.
Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
  " Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up !
  Her heart within her did not fail :
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
  And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn :
  He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood :
" If you are not the heiress born,
  And I," said he, " the next in blood—

" If you are not the heiress born,
  And I," said he, " the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
  And you shall still be Lady Clare."

Alfred Lord Tennyson

THE SANDS O' DEE

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,—
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands o' Dee!"
The western wind was wild and dank wi' foam,
And all alone went she.

The creeping tide came up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.
The blinding mist came down and hid the land:
And never home came she.

"Oh, is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress o' golden hair,
O' drownèd maiden's hair,
Above the nets at sea?"
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee.

They row'd her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee.

Charles Kingsley

THE MOCKING FAIRY

"Won't you look out of your window, Mrs. Gill?"
Quoth the Fairy, nidding, nodding in the garden;
"*Can't* you look out of your window, Mrs. Gill?"
Quoth the Fairy, laughing softly in the garden;
But the air was still, the cherry boughs were still,
And the ivy-tod 'neath the empty sill,
And never from her window looked out Mrs. Gill
On the Fairy shrilly mocking in the garden.

"What have they done with you, you poor Mrs.
Gill?"
Quoth the Fairy brightly glancing in the garden;
"Where have they hidden you, you poor Mrs.
Gill?"
Quoth the Fairy dancing lightly in the garden;
But night's faint veil now wrapped the hill,
Stark 'neath the stars stood the dead-still Mill,
And out of her cold cottage never answered Mrs. Gill
The Fairy mimbling mambling in the garden.

Walter de la Mare

FAERY SONG

SHED no tear—O shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.
Weep no more—O weep no more!
Young buds sleep in the root's white core.
Dry your eyes—O dry your eyes!
For I was taught in Paradise
To ease my breast of melodies—
Shed no tear.

Overhead—Look overhead
'Mong the blossoms white and red—
Look up, look up. I flutter now
On this flush pomegranate bough—
See me—'tis this silvery bill
Ever cures the good man's ill—
Shed no tear—O shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.
Adieu, adieu—I fly, adieu!
I vanish in the heaven's blue—
Adieu, Adieu!

John Keats

TWILIGHT WIND

THERE's a wind here and a wind there, there's the mad old wind from the sea,
The dancing breeze of the morning hours, and the storm wind, fierce and shrill ;
But there's nothing so sweet in all the world as the wind that cries to me
When the sun is low and the tide is low and I climb along our hill.

'Tis the twilight wind, the enchanted wind, and it sings a magical rune,
And all the whishty people wake as it wanders up and down,
Strumming its queer little shadowy fiddle beneath the light of the moon,
In a mist of sunset and dusk and the chimney smoke of the dreaming town.

I climb along the dew-set lane, and I listen among the trees,
And watch the wee little elfin folk lighting their tiny fires,
The teeny weeny shoemaker men are working as hard as you please,
And the darling fairy babies are swinging high in the foxglove spires.

The dancers dance in the fairy ring to the throb of fiddle and fife,
While the magic song of the twilight wind beats out the lilting time ;
The cobweb threads are gathered and spun by each little brisk good-wife,
While the crooked goblin ringers o' bells are playing a fairy chime.

Now don't you hearken to folk as say that the night is darksome and chill ;
Just you follow the cry of the wind up the flowery lane,

Just you follow the twilight wind as it flees along
the hill,
And you'll meet the Little Good Folk up there,
many a time and again.

Thora Stowell

MEG MERRILIES

Old Meg she was a Gipsy,
And lived upon the Moors :
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
And her house was out of doors.
Her apples were swart blackberries,
Her currants pods o' broom ;
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
Her book a churchyard tomb.

Her brothers were the craggy hills,
Her sisters larchen trees—
Alone with her great family
She lived as she did please.
No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And 'stead of supper she would stare
Full hard against the moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And every night the dark glen yew
She wove, and she would sing.
And with her fingers old and brown
She plaited mats o' rushes,
And gave them to the cottagers
She met among the bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen
And tall as Amazon :
An old red blanket cloak she wore ;
A chip hat had she on.
God rest her aged bones somewhere—
She died full long agone !

John Keats

THE HOUSE OF DREAMS

I WILL make you a little house with a roof of thatch,
And a window as clear as crystal dew, and a door
With a knocker of pearl, and a silver dream for a latch,
And a carpet of little blue feathers to lay on your floor.

And your bed shall be rocked by the music of wind and of sea,
And your fire be lit by the daffodil light of Spring ;
And high on the shining wall of your house shall be
The Bird of Joy in an ivory cage to sing.

Never a sorrow shall enter, and never pain,
Never the sorrowful cry of the wind shall fret
Or your heart be sad or your eyes be dim again :
Sleep, O my Heart of Gold, sleep and forget.

Thora Stowell

DAYBREAK

A WIND came up out of the sea,
And said, " O mists, make room for me."

It hailed the ships, and cried, " Sail on,
Ye mariners, the night is gone."

And hurried landward far away,
Crying, " Awake ! it is the day."

It said unto the forest " Shout !
Hang all your leafy banners out ! "

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,
And said, " O bird, awake and sing."

And o'er the farms, " O chanticleer,
Your clarion blow ; the day is near."

It whispered to the fields of corn,
" Bow down, and hail the coming morn."

It shouted through the belfry-tower,
" Awake, O bell ! proclaim the hour."

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,
And said, " Not yet ! in quiet lie."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

RAGGED ROBINS

THE buttercups are bold as brass,
The daisies lift their silver shields,
And sorrel rings her rusty bells
Over the happy summer fields,
And down by the wild-rose hedge I see
Dear Ragged Robins waiting me.

Fine ladies waxy-pink and white,
The roses lift their sweet, proud faces,
Milkmaids curtsey to the breeze
Down by the ditch's shady places ;
But Robin lifts his head to spy
If I at last am passing by.

Thora Stowell

THE COMING OF SPRING

I AM coming, little maiden,
With the pleasant sunshine laden,
With the honey for the bee,
With the blossom for the tree,
With the flower and with the leaf—
Till I come the time is brief.

I am coming, I am coming.
Hark ! the little bee is humming ;

See the lark is soaring high
In the bright and sunny sky;
And the gnats are on the wing—
Little maiden, now is Spring.

See the yellow catkins cover
All the slender willows over,
And on mossy banks so green
Starlike primroses are seen,
And their clustering leaves below
White and purple violets grow.

Hark! the little lambs are bleating,
And the cawing rooks are meeting
In the elms, a noisy crowd,
And all birds are singing loud,
And the first white butterfly
In the sun goes flitting by.

Little maiden, look around thee,
Green and flowery fields surround thee;
Every little stream is bright,
All the orchard trees are white,
And each small and waving shoot
Has for thee sweet flower or fruit.

Turn thy eyes to earth and heaven.
God, for thee, the spring hath given,
Taught the birds their melodies,
Clothed the earth and cleared the skies.
For thy pleasure or thy food
Pour thy soul in gratitude,
So mayst thou 'mid blessings dwell.
Little maiden, fare thee well.

Mary Howitt

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST

O, WERT thou in the cauld blast,
  On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie[1] to the angry airt,[2]
  I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee;
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
  Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield[3] should be my bosom,
  To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
  Sae bleak and bare, sae bleak and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
  If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
  Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown,
  Wad be my queen, wad be my queen,

Robert Burns

A RED, RED ROSE

O MY Luve's like a red, red rose
  That's newly sprung in June.
O my Luve's like the melodie
  That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
  So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
  Till a' the seas gang[4] dry:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
  And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will luve thee still, my dear,
  While the sands o' life shall run.

[1] cloak.
[2] quarter from which the wind blows.
[3] shelter. [4] go.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve,
  And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
  Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

Robert Burns

SPRING, THE SWEET SPRING

SPRING, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing:
  Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu we, to witta woo!

The Palm and May make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay:
  Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu we, to witta woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet:
  Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu we, to witta woo!
    Spring, the sweet Spring!

Thomas Nash

ANACREON'S ODE TO THE SWALLOW

THOU indeed, little Swallow,
A sweet yearly comer,
Art building a hollow
New nest every summer,
And straight dost depart
Where no gazing can follow,
Past Memphis,[1] down Nile!
Ah, but Love all the while
Builds his nest in my heart,

[1] The ancient capital of Egypt, south of Cairo, near the Pyramids.

Through the cold winter weeks;
And as one Love takes flight,
Comes another, O Swallow,
In an egg warm and white,
And another is callow!
And the large gaping beaks
Chirp all day and all night;
And the Loves who are older
Help the young and the poor Loves,
And the young Loves grown bolder
Increase by the score Loves—
Why, what can be done?
If a noise comes from one,
Can I bear all this rout of a hundred and
more Loves?

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

SPRING QUIET

Gone were but the Winter,
Come were but the Spring,
I would go to a covert
Where the birds sing;

Where in the whitethorn
Singeth a thrush,
And a robin sings
In the holly-bush.

Full of fresh scents
Are the budding boughs
Arching high over
A cool green house:

Full of sweet scents,
And whispering air
Which sayeth softly:
"We spread no snare;

"Here dwell in safety,
Here dwell alone,

With a clear stream
  And a mossy stone.

"Here the sun shineth
  Most shadily;
Here is heard an echo
  Of the far sea,
  Though far off it be."

Christina Rossetti

SPRING SONG

The sun doth arise
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the spring.

The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound;
Whilst our sports shall be seen
On the echoing green.

Old John, with white hair,
Doth laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say:
"Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys—
In our youth-time were seen
On the echoing green."

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be cheery;
The sun doth descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers,
Many sisters and brothers,

Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest—
And sport no more seen
On the darkening green.

William Blake

TO DAFFODILS

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon :
As yet the early rising Sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song ;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a Spring ;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or any thing.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain ;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

Robert Herrick

TO BLOSSOMS

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast ?
Your date is not so past
But you may stay yet here awhile
To blush and gently smile,
And go at last.

What! were ye born to be
  An hour or half's delight,
  And so to bid good night?
'Twas pity Nature brought you forth
  Merely to show your worth
    And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
  May read how soon things have
  Their end, though ne'er so brave[1]:
And after they have shown their pride
  Like you awhile, they glide
    Into the grave.

Robert Herrick

TO VIOLETS

Welcome, maids of honour!
  You do bring
  In the spring,
And wait upon her.

She has virgins many,
  Fresh and fair;
  Yet you are
More sweet than any.

You're the maiden posies,
  And so graced
  To be placed
'Fore damask roses.

Yet, though thus respected,
  By-and-by
  Ye do lie,
Poor girls, neglected.

Robert Herrick

[1] fine.

TO SPRING

O THOU with dewy locks, who lookest down
Through the clear windows of the morning, turn
Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring!

The hills tell one another, and the listening
Valleys hear; all our longing eyes are turned
Up to thy bright pavilions: issue forth
And let thy holy feet visit our clime!

Come o'er the eastern hills, and let our winds
Kiss thy perfumed garments; let us taste
Thy morn and evening breath; scatter thy pearls
Upon our lovesick land that mourns for thee.

O deck her forth with thy fair fingers; pour
Thy soft kisses on her bosom; and put
Thy golden crown upon her languish'd head,
Whose modest tresses are bound up for thee.

William Blake

SONG

APRIL, April,
  Laugh thy girlish laughter;
Then, the moment after,
Weep thy girlish tears!
April, that mine ears
Like a lover greetest,
If I tell thee, sweetest,
All my hopes and fears,
April, April,
Laugh thy golden laughter,
But, the moment after,
Weep thy golden tears!

Sir William Watson

A CHANTED CALENDAR

First came the primrose
On the bank high,
Like a maiden looking forth
From the window of a tower
When the battle rolls below,
So look'd she,
And saw the storms go by.

Then came the wind-flower
In the valley left behind,
As a wounded maiden, pale
With purple streaks of woe,
When the battle has roll'd by,
Wanders to and fro,
So totter'd she,
Dishevell'd in the wind.

Then came the daisies,
On the first of May,
Like a banner'd show's advance
While the crowd runs by the way,
With ten thousand flowers about them they came
trooping through the fields,
As a happy people come,
So came they,
As a happy people come
When the war has roll'd away,
With dance and tabor, pipe and drum,
All make holiday.

Then came the cowslip;
Like a dancer in the fair,
She spread her little mat of green,
And on it danced she,
With a fillet bound about her brow,
A fillet round her happy brow,
A golden fillet round her brow,
And rubies in her hair.

Sydney Dobell

TO MAY

MAY! queen of blossoms,
  And fulfilling flowers,
With what pretty music
  Shall we charm the hours?
Wilt thou have pipe and reed,
Blown in the open mead?
Or to the lute give heed
  In the green bowers?

Thou hast no need of us,
  Or pipe or wire;
Thou hast the golden bee
  Ripen'd with fire;
And many thousand more
Songsters, that thee adore,
Filling earth's grassy floor
  With new desire.

Thou hast thy mighty herds,
  Tame and free-livers;
Doubt not, thy music too
  In the deep rivers;
And the whole plumy flight
Warbling the day and night—
Up at the gates of light,
  See, the lark quivers!

Lord Thurlow

TO THE CUCKOO

O BLITHE new-comer! I have heard,
  I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee bird,
  Or but a wandering voice?

While I am lying on the grass
  Thy two-fold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
  At once far off and near.

Though babbling only to the vale
  Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
  Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
  Even yet thou art to me
No bird: but an invisible thing,
  A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my schoolboy days
  I listened to; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways,
  In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
  Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
  Still longed for, never seen.

William Wordsworth

"IN PRAISE OF WHAT I LOVE."

I KNOW a dingle in a leafy wood
  Filled with the fragrance of the perfect May.
Here the grey trees for centuries have stood,
  And Spring wreathes garlands on them, new
    and gay.
Is there a moment of the shining day,
  Fairer than this, which sees the rising sun
Slant the pale yellow of his early ray
  On dew-drenched fallows, and the fine threads
    spun
By long-legged spinners in the clefts of trees,
Float their light gossamer upon the breeze?
Here leaps the limber-footed, listening hare—
And here the Cuckoo, blithe and debonair,
  Calls from the willows in the water leas,
Remote, elusive, a thin tongue of air.

Pamela Tennant

SUMMER VOICES

Cuckoo and the Corncrake answering one another,
Cuckoo flitting and laughing from bough to bough,
"We are the Summer's voices, brother, little brother,
I from the dun of leaves; from dun of grass, thou.

Here I shout Cuckoo, ever a gay roamer,
I and my merry girl, now low, now high.
Lacking us two, little brother, it were hardly Summer,
Thou in the cool of grass, in cool of leaves, I."

Answers the Corncrake from the ripening meadow,
"Crake! Here I have heart's content, green aisles among,
Telling my love-tale over in the shine and shadow,
To the brown ear of my little love who broods so long."

"Pooh!" laughs the Cuckoo, flitting and fleeting,
"Of such dull domestic joys we are not fain;
We've an egg in the sparrow's nest, and my wild sweeting
Flies beside me, free as the wind, o'er hill and plain."

All day in his hidden bliss the Corncrake's talking,
All day through the gold and blue the Cuckoo flits,
Over the white and golden hills Summer comes walking,
Linnet and finch, her pages and knights, thrushes and tits.

Katharine Tynan

JULY

THE wind is in the willows, they are white beneath the breeze,
And the river rushes rustle as they grow.
The skimming swifts and swallows dip and sweep beneath the trees,
Where the white-flowered water-weeds blow.
At the foot of leaning poplars bowing grey against the blue,
The quiet sheep are feeding newly shorn,
And among the standing barley, shot with poppies, through and through,
The land-rail is craking in the corn.

All day the doves are calling, and the rose is on the hedge,
Where the black-berried bryonies stray,
The yellow flower-de-luce is growing tall among the sedge,
Where the clover was crimson in the hay.
O, the sounds and scents of summer blowing free upon the breeze!
The honeysuckle fashioned like a horn,
And the fragrance of the elder, in a dusk of stirring trees,
And the night-jar churring on the thorn.

Pamela Tennant

NIGHT-FALL

STRANGELY forlorn the crying seagulls sound,
Wheeling at dust above the silver streak,
Or dipping, ghostlike, to the reedy ground
About the borders of the silent creek.

Lone and apart the stately heron flies,
Sinking from sight, becalmed, on outspread wing,
Where gathering clouds mass in the western skies,
Like huddled flocks at evening shepherding.

Over the dim green fields there faintly floats
Answering echo of a peewit's wail,
Till daylight dies, and in soft limpid notes
Rises the carol of the nightingale.

Lilian Holmes

THE TRAVELLER'S RETURN

SWEET to the morning traveller
  The song amid the sky,
Where, twinkling in the dewy light,
  The skylark soars on high.

And cheering to the traveller
  The gales that round him play,
When faint and heavily he drags
  Along his noontide way.

And when beneath the unclouded sun
  Full wearily toils he,
The flowing water makes to him
  A soothing melody.

And when the evening light decays,
  And all is calm around,
There is sweet music to his ear
  In the distant sheep-bells' sound.

But oh! of all beautiful sounds
  Of evening or of morn,
The sweetest is the voice of love
  That welcomes his return.

Robert Southey

I'VE BEEN ROAMING

I've been roaming, I've been roaming,
  Where the meadow-dew is sweet,
And like a queen I'm coming
  With its pearls upon my feet.

I've been roaming, I've been roaming,
  O'er red rose and lily fair,
And like a sylph I'm coming
  With its blossoms in my hair.

I've been roaming, I've been roaming,
  Where the honeysuckle creeps,
And like a bee I'm coming
  With its kisses on my lips.

I've been roaming, I've been roaming,
  Over hill and over plain,
And like a bird I'm coming
  To my bower back again.

George Darley

A LAKE AND A FAIRY BOAT

A LAKE and a fairy boat
To sail in the moonlight clear,—
And merrily we would float
From the dragons that watch us here!

Thy gown should be snow-white silk;
And strings of orient pearls,
Like gossamers dipped in milk,
Should twine with thy raven curls!

Red rubies should deck thy hands,
And diamonds should be thy dower—
But Fairies have broke their wands,
And wishing has lost its power!

Thomas Hood

THE OLD LOVE

Out of my door I step into
The country, all her scent and dew,
Nor travel there by a hard road,
Dusty and far from my abode.

The country washes to my door
Green miles on miles in soft uproar,
The thunder of the woods, and then
The backwash of green surf again.

Beyond the feverfew and stocks,
The guelder-rose and hollyhocks;
Outside my trellised porch a tree
Of lilac frames a sky for me.

A stretch of primrose and pale green
To hold the tender Hesper [1] in;
Hesper that by the moon makes pale
Her silver keel and silver sail.

The country silence wraps me quite,
Silence and song and pure delight;
The country beckons all the day
Smiling, and but a step away.

This is that country seen across
How many a league of love and loss,
Prayed for and longed for, and as far
As fountains in the desert are.

This is that country at my door,
Whose fragrant airs run on before,
And call me when the first birds stir
In the green wood to walk with her.

Katharine Tynan

[1] The evening star.

A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird
  Whose nest is in a water's shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
  Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
  That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these,
  Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
  Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
  And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
  In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
  Is come, my love is come to me.

Christina Rossetti

TO LUCASTA, ON GOING TO THE WARS

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
  That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
  To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
  The first foe in the field,
And with a stronger faith embrace
  A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
  As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much
  Loved I not Honour more.

Richard Lovelace

TO HELEN

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
  Like those Nicaean barks [1] of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
  The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
  To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
  Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad [2] airs, have brought me home
  To the glory that was Greece
  And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
  How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
  Ah, Psyche,[3] from the regions which
  Are Holy Land!

Edgar Allan Poe

TRUST THOU THY LOVE

TRUST thou thy love; if she be proud, is she not sweet?
Trust thou thy love: if she be mute, is she not pure?
Lay thou thy soul full in her hands, low at her feet;
Fail, Sun and Breath!—yet, for thy peace, she shall endure.

John Ruskin

[1] A reference to the famous yacht in which the Roman poet Catullus returned home from an official visit to Bithynia.

[2] Water-nymph.

[3] A reference to the fable of Psyche, the beautiful bride of the god Cupid.

THE GOLD PRINCESS

"SOMETIMES," said the Gold Princess,
"I grow weary of my crown,
Weary of my shining dress.
I would fain go down
Where the singing children pass,
Gathering daisies in the grass."

"Sometimes," said the Gold Princess,
"When the swift bird-shadows go,
Speeding through the summer air
To their nests so far below,
I would fain be speeding after,
Following their light and laughter."

"Sometimes," said the Gold Princess,
"I grow weary of this place,
Of long days of idleness,
Mirrors flinging back my face,
Lonely drifts of marble rooms,
Garden closes, still as tombs."

Still upon her ivory throne,
With gold sunshine on her face,
There she sits and dreams alone,
In that dim, enchanted place. . . .

. . . . .

God be praised that such as we,
Still be poor and loved—and free!

Thora Stowell

DREAM LOVE

YOUNG Love lies sleeping
  In May time of the year.
Among the lilies,
  Lapped in the tender light:
White lambs come grazing,
  White doves come building there;
And round about him
  The May bushes are white.

Soft moss the pillow,
  For oh! a softer cheek;
Broad leaves cast shadow
  Upon the heavy eyes:
There winds and waters
  Grow lulled and scarcely speak;
There twilight lingers
  The longest in the skies.

Young Love lies dreaming;
  But who shall tell the dream?
A perfect sunlight
  On rustling forest tips;
Or perfect moonlight
  Upon a rippling stream;
Or perfect silence,
  Or song of cherished lips.

Burn odours round him
  To fill the drowsy air;
Weave silent dances
  Around him to and fro;
For oh! in waking
  The sights are not so fair,
And song and silence
  Are not like these below.

Young Love lies dreaming
  Till summer days are gone,—
Dreaming and drowsing
  Away to perfect sleep:

He sees the beauty
  Sun hath not looked upon,
And tastes the fountain
  Unutterably deep.

Him perfect music
  Doth hush unto his rest,
And through the pauses
  The perfect silence calms.
Oh! poor the voices
  Of earth from east to west,
And poor earth's stillness
  Between her stately palms.

Young Love lies drowsing
  Away to poppied death;
Cool shadows deepen
  Across the sleeping face:
So fails the summer
  With warm, delicious breath;
And what hath autumn
  To give us in its place?

Draw close the curtains
  Of branched evergreen;
Change cannot touch them
  With fading fingers sere:
Here the first violets
  Perhaps will bud unseen,
And a dove, maybe,
  Return to nestle here.

Christina Rossetti

TO-DAY

So here hath been dawning
  Another blue day :
Think, wilt thou let it
  Slip useless away ?

Out of eternity
  This new day is born ;
Into eternity
  At night doth return.

Behold it aforetime
  No eye ever did :
So soon it for ever
  From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning
  Another blue day :
Think, wilt thou let it
  Slip useless away ?

Thomas Carlyle

CHIMES

Brief, on a flying night,
  From the shaken tower,
A flock of bells take flight,
  And go with the hour.

Like birds from the cote to the gales,
  Abrupt—O hark !
A fleet of bells set sails,
  And go to the dark.

Sudden the cold airs swing,
  Alone, aloud,
A verse of bells takes wing
  And flies with the cloud.

Alice Meynell

THE ROSE

A ROSE, as fair as ever saw the North,
Grew in a little garden all alone ;
A sweeter flower did Nature ne'er put forth,
Nor fairer garden yet was never known :

The maidens danced about it morn and noon,
And learnéd bards of it their ditties made ;
The nimble fairies by the pale-faced moon
Watered the root and kissed her pretty shade.

But well-a-day !—the gardener careless grew ;
The maids and fairies both were kept away,
And in a drought the caterpillars threw
Themselves upon the bud and every spray.

God shield the stock ! If heaven send no supplies,
The fairest blossom of the garden dies.

William Browne

THAT WIND

THAT wind, I used to hear it swelling,
With joy divinely deep ;
You might have seen my hot tears welling,
But rapture made me weep.

I used to love on winter nights
To lie and dream alone
Of all the rare and real delights
My lonely years had known.

And oh !—above the best—of those
That coming time should bear,
Like heaven's own glorious stars they rose,
Still beaming bright and fair.

Emily Brontë

TO ANTHEA, WHO MAY COMMAND HIM ANYTHING

Bid me to live, and I will live
  Thy Protestant to be ;
Or bid me love, and I will give
  A loving heart to thee.

A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
  A heart as sound and free
As in the whole world thou canst find,
  That heart I'll give to thee.

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay
  To honour thy decree :
Or bid it languish quite away,
  And't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep
  While I have eyes to see :
And, having none, yet will I keep
  A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I'll despair
  Under that cypress-tree :
Or bid me die, and I will dare
  E'en death to die for thee.

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
  The very eyes of me :
And hast command of every part
  To live and die for thee.

Robert Herrick

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Break, break, break,
  On thy cold grey stones, O Sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
  The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
  That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
  That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
  To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
  And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
  At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
  Will never come back to me.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

HOME

Stay, stay at home, my heart, and rest;
Home-keeping hearts are happiest,
For those that wander they know not where
Are full of trouble and full of care;
  To stay at home is best.

Weary and homesick and distressed,
They wander east, they wander west,
And are baffled and beaten and blown about
By the winds of the wilderness of doubt;
  To stay at home is best.

Then stay at home, my heart, and rest;
The bird is safest in its nest;
O'er all that flutter their wings and fly
A hawk is hovering in the sky;
  To stay at home is best.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

WHEN BEGGARS RIDE

THEY say that every wish of ours
Adds one more feather to the wings
That lift us out of this grey world
Into the realm of fairy things.
And there, where every wish comes true,
Wishes are horses, winged and fine ;
So even beggars there can ride—
I only wish such steeds were mine !

O Dearest Dear, I'd ride with you
Beyond the moon, beyond the sun ;
We'd pick the stars to crown your hair,
And chase the comets, and we'd run
A-gallop up the Milky Way,
And drain the Dawn's enchanted wine.
O Dearest Dear, how far we'd stray,
If such fine steeds were yours and mine !

We'd climb the stately Pyramids
And see the splendours of old Rome,
And cherry blossom in Japan,
And pale Niagara's crown of foam,
And moonlit glories of the Taj,[1]
And Southern Seas whose islands shine
Like fairy dreams—if it were true
That such fine steeds were yours and mine.
But Dearest Dear, we're beggars yet,
Except when, dreaming, we forget.

Thora Stowell

[1] The Taj Mahal, a famous Indian temple.

THE NIGHTINGALE

THE speckled bird sings in the tree
When all the stars are silver-pale.
Come, children, walk the night with me,
And we shall hear the nightingale.

The nightingale is a shy bird,
He flits before you through the night.
And now the sleepy vale is stirred
Through all its green and gold and white ;

The moon leans from her place to hear,
The stars shed golden star-dust down,
For now comes in the sweet o' the year,
The country's gotten the greenest gown.

The blackbird turns upon his bed,
The thrush has oped a sleeping eye,
Quiet each downy sleepy-head ;
But who goes singing up the sky ?

It is, it is the nightingale,
In the tall tree upon the hill.
To moonlight and the dewy vale
The nightingale will sing his fill.

He's but a homely, speckled bird,
But he has gotten a golden flute,
And when his wondrous song is heard,
Blackbird and thrush and lark are mute.

Troop, children dear, out to the night,
Clad in the moonlight silver-pale,
And in a world of green and white
'Tis you shall hear the nightingale.

Katharine Tynan

THE MERMAID

I

Who would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl
On a throne ?

II

I would be a mermaid fair ;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day ;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair ;
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
" Who is it loves me ? who loves not me ? "
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall,
Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of gold
Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall ;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III

But at night I would wander away, away,
I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,

And lightly vault from the throne and play
  With the mermen in and out of the rocks;
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,
  On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson shells,
  Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.
But if any came near I would call, and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap
From the diamond ledges that jut from the dells;
For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list,
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea;
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea;
But the king of them all would carry me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the sea;
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet silently,
All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

MY BIRD SINGS

Your pretty bird in a gilded cage
  Flutters its sorrowful wings,
But there's never a cage-bird yet could sing
  As my bird sings.

He's little and brown and wild and shy,
  But free to build and thrive.
Your poor bit thing behind its bars
  Is only half alive!

My bird sings out with the true wood-note,
  Yours pipes of sorrowful things,
And never, now, may he learn the song
  That my bird sings.

Never, now, may he wheel and soar
  With the sunshine on his wings.
O, a bird in a cage is a crippled thing—
  But *my* bird sings!

For mine is every bird that flies
  On free, wild wings;
And there's never a cage-bird yet could sing
  As my bird sings.

Thora Stowell

SHEEP AND LAMBS

All in the April evening,
  April airs were abroad;
The sheep with their little lambs
  Pass'd me by on the road.

The sheep with their little lambs
  Pass'd me by on the road;
All in the April evening
  I thought on the Lamb of God.

The lambs were weary and crying
  With a weak, human cry;
I thought on the Lamb of God
  Going meekly to die.

Up in the blue, blue mountains
  Dewy pastures are sweet;
Rest for the little bodies,
  Rest for the little feet.

Rest for the Lamb of God
  Up on the hill-top green,
Only a Cross of shame
  Two stark crosses between.

All in the April evening,
  April airs were abroad;
I saw the sheep with their lambs,
  And thought on the Lamb of God.

Katharine Tynan

JACK O' LANTERN

When Lady-Day one year we moved,
To leave the house we dearly loved,
We packed our things and all our ware,
A toweren waggon-load of gear,
And off we started down the road,
With two strong mares to draw the load.
But having neither cage nor bin
To put our wing-clipped Jackdaw in,
Father, he fetch'd our lantern out
And that's what made the folk to shout—

> "Why there goes Jack o' Lantern!
> We've heerd of Jack o' Lantern!
> But never thought to see 'un—No!
> Not see a Jack o' Lantern."

Dear, what a sight it were! the chairs
Were corded to the sides in pairs.
The clock, sewn up in canvas bag
Was stitched agin' the sofa lag,
The chest of drawers, stuffed fit to crack,
Was wedged in 'long with Father's sack.
Tables, with all their lags in air,
Made room for boxes and to spare.
While pots, and pans, and tins, and pails,
Went swingen on a score of nails—

> Along of Jack o' Lantern,
> And "look at Jack o' Lantern"
> The mothers to the children cry,
> "Come out! see Jack o' Lantern!"

And now the Time be flyen fast,
But often looken down the Past,
I mind me of the home we left,
Familiar rooms o' life bereft.
The empty walls, the wide-flung sash,
The hearth all thick wi' last night's ash.
I knew to Mother it were pain
To think she'd never see 't again.

And yet wi' eyes but barely dry,
She smiled to hear the children cry—

"O! look at Jack o' Lantern!
We've heerd of Jack o' Lantern!
But never thought to see 'un—No!
A proper Jack o' Lantern."

Pamela Tennant

THE SOLITARY REAPER

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—

I listen'd, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

William Wordsworth

THE SHELL

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand;
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SANTA FILOMENA

WHENE'ER a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
    Our hearts in glad surprise,
    To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
    And lifts us unawares
    Out of all meaner cares.

Honour to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
    And by their overflow
    Raise us from what is low.

Thus thought I, as by night I read
Of the great army of the dead,
    The trenches cold and damp,
    The starved and frozen camp,—

The wounded from the battle-plain,
In dreary hospitals of pain,
    The cheerless corridors,
    The cold and stony floors.

Lo! in that house of misery
A Lady with a Lamp I see
    Pass through the glimmering gloom,
    And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
    Her shadow, as it falls
    Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be
Opened and then closed suddenly,
    The vision came and went,
    The light shone and was spent.

On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
    That light its rays shall cast
    From portals of the past.

A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good
Heroic womanhood.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I WILL arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

William Butler Yeats

THE BLUE GLASS BANGLE

I PASSED your garden yesterday,
The roses are all dead,
And the little desert sparrows play
In the dry iris bed,
And all your other pretty flowers
Are faded in these burning hours.

I lingered by your garden wall—
You will not come again,
So there's no meaning left at all,
The beauty is sheer pain—
  The wind that whispers to the leaves,
  The sunshine on the lily-sheaves.—

Beside the little garden door
Low in the dust I found
The print of your gay, dancing feet
In the dry, thirsty ground—
  Do you come back at night to play
  Where now you'll never come by day ?

Out in the dusty road they'd thrown
Dead leaves and flowers, and there
As I stood sadly all alone
A toy you used to wear,
  A little blue glass bangle, showed
  Broken and dulled in the dusty road.

Only the ghost of the child I knew
And the wandering desert wind
Know where I hid a half for you
And nobody else to find—
  Only the wind that flutes to the sky
  When shadow feet go dancing by.

The other half goes soon and late
Wherever my feet must go,
Till they reach at last a Postern Gate,
And a face I used to know
  Laughs at me from the gathering night,
  And beckons me in to the dawning light.

Thora Stowell

THE WOMEN OF THE WEST

They left the vine-wreathed cottage and the mansion on the hill,
The houses in the busy streets where life is never still,
The pleasures of the city, and the friends they cherished best :
For love they faced the wilderness—the Women of the West.

The roar, and rush, and fever of the city died away,
And the old-time joys and faces—they were gone for many a day ;
In their place the lurching coach-wheel, or the creaking bullock chains,
O'er the everlasting sameness of the never-ending plains.

In the slab-built, zinc-roofed homestead of some lately taken run,
In the tent beside the bankment of a railway just begun,
In the huts on new selections, in the camps of man's unrest,
On the frontiers of the Nation, live the Women of the West.

The red sun robs their beauty, and, in weariness and pain,
The slow years steal the nameless grace that never comes again ;
And there are hours men cannot soothe, and words men cannot say—
The nearest woman's face may be a hundred miles away.

The wide bush holds the secrets of their longing and desires,
When the white stars in reverence light their holy altar fires,
And silence, like the touch of God, sinks deep into the breast—
Perchance He hears and understands the Women of the West.

For them no trumpet sounds the call, no poet plies his arts—
They only hear the beating of their gallant, loving hearts.
But they have sung with silent lives the song all songs above—
The holiness of sacrifice, the dignity of love.

George Essex Evans

DREAMS

When the grey streets shut me in again in the days that come after,
When no more I shall see this blue, glittering sky,
Out of my store-house of dreams I shall take the love and the laughter,
The scents and sounds and colour I now lay by.

Oh waves that rock me and love me! Your sun-kissed splendour,
Your golden sands, with the frowning cliffs above,
Where the pitiful mosses and grasses and thyme creep, starrily tender:
You and the birds about you—you are the friends I love.

And when to me you are only dreams in the embers—
While you lie wild and forlorn 'neath the wintry sky—
Still you may know that the heart of your friend remembers:
Wait for me! Wait!—I shall come back again by and by.

Thora Stowell

SWEET LOVE IS DEAD

SWEET Love is dead :
  Where shall we bury him ?
In a green bed,
With no stone at his head,
  And no tears nor prayers to worry him.

Do you think he will sleep,
  Dreamless and quiet ?
Yes, if we keep
Silence, nor weep
  O'er the grave where the ground-worms riot.

By his tomb let us part.
  But hush ! he is waking !
He hath wingéd a dart,
And the mock-cold heart
  With the woe of want is aching.

Feign we no more
  Sweet Love lies breathless.
All we forswore
Be as before ;
  Death may die, but Love is deathless.

Alfred Austin

TO THE MOTHER

I HEARD them talking and praising the grey French country,
  Dotted with red roofs high and steep,
With just one grey stone church-tower keeping sentry
  Over the quiet dead asleep.
Grey skies and greyer dunes as grey as duty,
  Grey sands where grey gulls flew.
And I said in my passionate heart, they know not beauty,
  Beloved, who know not you.

I heard them praise the gold of the stormy sunset
And the pale moon's path on the sea ;
I thought of your clouds with their wild magnificent onset,
Your eagles screaming free.
I thought of your mild kind mountains, angel-bosomed,
Quiet in dusk and dew.
What flower of beauty that ever in Paradise blossomed,
Love, was denied to you ?

I thought of the pale green dawns, and gold day's closes.
Dear, I shall not forget
Nights when your skies were full of the flying roses,
Millions and millions yet.
All your still lakes and your rivers broad and gracious,
Dear mountain glens I knew ;
When the trump of judgment sounds and the world's in ashes
I shall remember you.

Remember ! foretaste of Heaven you are, O Mother !
By bog-lands, brown and bare,
Where every little pool is the blue sky's brother,
Your wild larks spring in the air.
Land of my heart ! smiling I heard their praises,
Smiling and sighing too.
I would give this grey French land for a handful of daisies
Plucked from the breast of you.

Katharine Tynan

CONTENT

SWEET are the thoughts that savour of content ;
The quiet mind is richer than a crown ;
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent ;
The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown :

Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbours quiet rest ;
The cottage that affords no pride nor care ;
The mean that 'grees with country music best ;
The sweet consort of mirth and music's fare ;
Obscuréd life sets down a type of bliss :
A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

Robert Greene

A PERFECT WOMAN

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleam'd upon my sight ;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament ;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair ;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair ;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn ;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a Woman too !
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty ;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine ;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death ;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;

A perfect Woman, nobly plann'd
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

William Wordsworth

THE SHEPHERDESS

She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
She guards them from the steep.
She feeds them on the fragrant height.
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
She has her soul to keep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

Alice Meynell

"OH! HOW I LOVE!"

Oh! how I love, on a fair summer's eve,
When streams of light pour down the golden west,
And on the balmy zephyrs tranquil rest
The silver clouds, far, far away to leave
All meaner thoughts, and take a sweet reprieve
From little cares; to find, with easy quest,
A fragrant wild, with Nature's beauty drest,
And there into delight my soul deceive.

There warm my breast with patriotic lore,
  Musing on Milton's fate [1]—on Sidney's bier [2]—
  Till their stern forms before my mind arise,
Perhaps on wing of Poesy upsoar,
  Full often dropping a delicious tear,
    When some melodious sorrow spells mine eyes.

John Keats

THE DAFFODILS

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
  That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
  A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
  And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
  Along the margin of a bay ;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
  Out-did the sparkling waves in glee :
A poet could not but be gay
  In such a jocund company ;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought :

For oft, when on my couch I lie
  In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
  Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth

[1] John Milton was blind and in his latter years neglected.

[2] Sir Philip Sidney, poet and courtier, was killed at the battle of Zutphen (1586).

MUSIC

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.
Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed ;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

TO AUTUMN

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness !
  Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
  With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run ;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
  And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
    To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
  With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
  For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
  Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
  Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
  Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
    Spares the next swath and all its twinéd flowers ;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
  Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
  Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
    Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barréd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

John Keats

TO A SKYLARK

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest:
Like a cloud of fire,
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightening
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an embodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,

Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel, that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody:—

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embower'd
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflower'd,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy wingéd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain awaken'd flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine ;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Match'd with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt—
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain ?
What fields, or waves, or mountains ?
What shapes of sky or plain ?
What love of thine own kind ? What ignorance of pain ?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be :
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee :
Thou lovest ; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not ;

Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now!

Percy Bysshe Shelley

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go—
Call once yet,
In a voice that she will know;
"Margaret! Margaret!"

Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear :
Children's voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again !
Call her once and come away ;
This way, this way.
" Mother dear, we cannot stay !
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down ;
Call no more !
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore ;
Then come down !
She will not come though you call all day :
Come away, come away !

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell
The far-off sound of a silver bell ?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep ;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam ;
Where the salt weed sways in the stream ;
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground ;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye ?
When did music come this way ?
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away ?
Once she sat with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sat on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair and she tended it well,

When down swung the sound of the far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea ;
She said, " I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'T will be Easter-time in the world—ah me !
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee."
I said : " Go up, dear heart, through the waves !
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves ! "
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?
" The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan ;
Long prayers," I said, " in the world they say ;
Come ! " I said, and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town ;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sat by the pillar ; we saw her clear :
" Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here !
Dear heart," I said, " we are long alone ;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book !
Loud prays the priest ; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more !
Come away, come down, call no more !

Down, down, down !
Down to the depths of the sea !
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings : " O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its
toy !
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well ;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun ! "
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the shuttle falls from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea :
And her eyes are set in a stare ;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh,
For the cold, strange eyes of a little mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children ;
Come, children, come down !
The hoarse wind blows colder ;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing : "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she !
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring tides are low ;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks thrown mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom ;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright sea-weed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town,
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down.
Singing : " There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she !
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

Matthew Arnold

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THE Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
  The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
  And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
  And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
  And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds :

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r,
  The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
  Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
  Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
  The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
  The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
  No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
  Or busy housewife ply her evening care :
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
  Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
  Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke :
How jocund did they drive their team afield !
  How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
  Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
  The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
  And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour :
  The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault
  If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
  The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
  Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
  Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death ?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
  Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;

Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
  Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
  Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
  And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
  The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
  And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast
  The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
  Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
  The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
  And read their history in a nation's eyes—

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
  Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
  And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
  To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
  With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
  Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool, sequester'd vale of life
  They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,
  Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
  Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd
Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply :
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind ?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate ;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree ;
Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he :

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him
borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon agéd thorn:"

The Epitaph

"Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

"Large was his beauty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a
friend.

"No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God."

Thomas Gray

VIRTUE

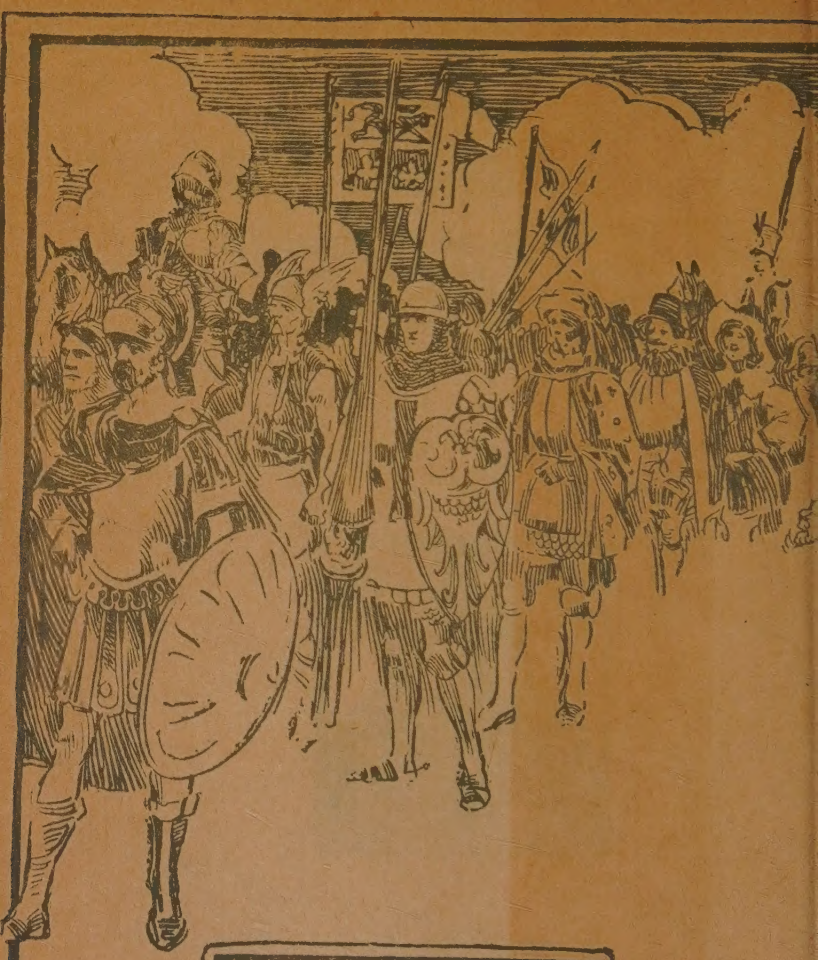
Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky:
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives ;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

George Herbert



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